



India Song

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Centre Francophone at Webster University

An organization dedicated to promoting Francophone culture and helping French educators.

Contact info: Lionel Cuillé, Ph.D., Jane and Bruce Robert Chair in French and Francophone Studies, Webster University, 314-246-8619, francophone@webster.edu, facebook.com/centrefrancophoneinstlouis, webster.edu/arts-and-sciences/affiliates-events/centre-francophone



Alliance Française de St. Louis

A member-supported nonprofit center engaging the St. Louis community in French language and culture.

Contact info: 314-432-0734, bonjour@alliancestl.org, alliancestl.org



American Association of Teachers of French

The only professional association devoted exclusively to the needs of French teachers at all levels, with the mission of advancing the study of the French language and French-speaking literatures and cultures both in schools and in the general public.

Contact info: Audra Merfeld-Langston, president, Greater St. Louis Chapter, audram@mst.edu, www.frenchteachers.org



Les Amis ("The Friends")

French Creole heritage preservationist group for the Mid-Mississippi River Valley. Promotes the Creole Corridor on both sides of the Mississippi River from Cahokia-Chester, IL, and Ste. Genevieve-St. Louis, MO. Parts of the Corridor are in the process of nomination for the designation of UNESCO World Heritage Site through Les Amis.

Contact info: 660-882-5946, info@les-amis.org, les-amis.org



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Cinema St. Louis offers French programming at the annual Robert Classic French Film Festival and the Robert French and French-Language Focus at the Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival (Nov. 5-22, 2020).



The 12th Annual Robert Classic French Film Festival celebrates St. Louis' Gallic heritage and France's cinematic legacy. Because of the Covid-19 health crisis, the fest will be presented virtually this year. This short video provides more information on CSL's decision to move its 2020 festivals and events online. CSL is partnering with Eventive, which also handles our ticketing, to present the Virtual Festival.

Regrettably, streaming rights to most of the films we planned to feature at the 2020 Robert Classic French Film Festival were not available to us. But CSL is pleased that we're able to offer a trio of works from the original lineup: Marguerite Duras' rarely seen "India Song"; a new restoration of Jacqueline Audry's "Olivia"; and René Clément's "Rider on the Rain," which is part of our year-long Golden Anniversaries programming that features films from 1970.

CSL will screen most of this year's original festival slate in the 2021 edition of the Robert Classic French Film Festival.

Although the films will be presented virtually, the programs will still feature recorded introductions by and post-film discussions with film or French scholars and critics.

All films are in French with English subtitles.

TICKETS & PASSES

Tickets: Individual tickets are \$10 for general admission, \$8 for Cinema St. Louis members and students with valid and current photo IDs. (There will be a credit-card/handling fee of \$1.50 for all tickets.) To obtain a student discount code, contact Brian Spath (brian@cinemastlouis.org) and provide an image of a currently valid student ID.

Passes: All-access passes are available for \$25, \$20 for CSL members. (There will be a credit-card/handling fee of \$2.31 for the \$25 pass and of \$2.05 for the \$20 member pass.)

Contributions: CSL will gratefully accept contributions of any size to help with the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Click [here](#) for ways to support the organization.

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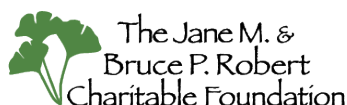
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India Song

Marguerite Duras, 1975, 120 min., color

Associated with both the nouveau roman literary and the Left Bank film movements, Marguerite Duras was a versatile polymath who worked as a novelist, playwright, essayist, short-story writer, screenwriter, and film director. From a cinematic perspective, Duras' best-known work is her screenplay for Alain Resnais' "Hiroshima, mon amour," but she also directed more than a dozen of her own features. Because Duras' films remain difficult to access in the U.S., the Classic French Film Festival is especially pleased to offer what many consider her masterpiece, "India Song." Based on an unproduced play that adapted her novel "Le Vice-consul," the film chronicles the discontent of the wife (Delphine Seyrig) of the French ambassador in 1930s India. Bored with her oppressive lifestyle, she compulsively sleeps with a series of men but refuses the advances of the entranced vice-consul of Lahore (Michael Lonsdale).

Senses of Cinema writes: "It is easy or, rather, impossible not to be seduced by the film's lustrous visual surface and its deceptively hummable tango-inflected score. A quintet of swooningly gorgeous actors, led by an impossibly chic Delphine Seyrig, drift about in a lavish Art Nouveau villa. They sip champagne from crystal goblets, puff languorously on cigarettes and dance sedately to Carlos D'Alessio's catchy tunes. They slip, at odd moments, out of their clothes (courtesy of Cerruti 1881) to pose in some vaguely eroticised tableaux vivants. None of the actors speak; instead, voices from off-screen comment on the action in hushed, reverent tones. Whoever these unknown speakers may be, they seem to enjoy the wondrously outré spectacle as much as we do. To quote David Thomson, 'India Song' has 'levels of nouveau roman and fashion show' that no fan of hardcore cinematic glamour could hope to resist."

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

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Olivia

Jacqueline Audry, 1951, 96 min., B&W, new restoration

A remarkable work by Jacqueline Audry (1908-77), one of France's first groundbreaking female filmmakers, "Olivia" deserves rediscovery after being neglected for almost 70 years. Plunging the viewer — and the main character — into a true lion's den, Audry depicts a 19th-century boarding school for young girls. The two mistresses of the house, Miss Julie (Edwige Feuillere) and Miss Cara (Simone Simon), are engaged in a turf war — and a war of the heart. Competing for the affections of their students, they rouse passion, hatred, and unexpected reversals of loyalties. Although "Olivia" does not address female homosexuality directly, the film sensitively explores the students' discovery of love and attraction and the awakening of their senses. Shutting away its young actresses in a somber, gothic space, Audry creates a world almost without men and makes a fundamentally feminist film.

The LA Times writes: "Dense with the swoonworthy perfume of desire both youthful and seasoned, 'Olivia' is an incandescent period drama ripe for rediscovery. A seminal work of female-directed and queer cinema by Jacqueline Audry, it brings to rich emotional life the swirl of influence and passion inside an all-girls boarding school buzzing with sentimental education around its grand central staircase. Audry's silky, dreamlike balancing act, adapted from a novel by her sister Colette Audry, is as Gallic as they come. Somehow both coded and overt, tactile without telling all, 'Olivia' is an exquisitely diaphanous, nonjudgmental coming-of-age tale." Hailing the film as "a fascinating study of love and repression" and "posh, literate costume drama," J. Hoberman in the New York Times writes: "Audry's fluid camera work, particularly evident in her use of the school's grand staircase to mark a shifting hierarchy of students and teachers, suggests the influence of Max Ophüls, for whom she worked as an assistant."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Cait Lore, film critic for Cinema St. Louis' The Lens.

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Rider on the Rain

(La Passager de la pluie)

René Clément, 1970, 118 min., color

René Clément — the legendary director of "Forbidden Games" and "Purple Noon" — delivers a stylish thriller starring screen legend Charles Bronson ("Mr. Majestyk," "Once Upon a Time in the West," "Death Wish"). When a beautiful young woman (Marlène Jobert, "We Won't Grow Old Together") in the South of France is stalked and then assaulted by a mysterious masked assailant, she kills the man in self-defense and, in a moment of misjudgment, dumps his corpse over a cliff into the sea instead of calling the police. Trying to return to her life before the attack, her world is turned upside down when an American investigator (Bronson) shows up and, to her horror, seems to know everything about what she has done. "Rider on the Rain" — which is presented in the 118-minute French-language cut — features a haunting and beautiful score by Francis Lai ("Love Story") and wonderful supporting performances by Gabriele Tinti and Jill Ireland.

PopMatters writes: "'Rider on the Rain' kicked off a final string of four terrific thrillers from director René Clément. This excellent craftsman is best known, at least in the US, for the humanist war film 'Forbidden Games' (1952) and for one of actor Alain Delon's two early breakthroughs, 'Purple Noon' (1960), the first film version of Patricia Highsmith's novel 'The Talented Mr. Ripley' (1955). In the '60s, Clément turned to co-productions that threw together stars of various nationalities and aimed mainly at the English-language market. 'Rider on the Rain' headlines Bronson, yet it's not really his character's story. The audience's point of view aligns with its heroine, Mellie Mau (Marlène Jobert). This fascinating, labyrinthine film pulls off the rare trick of maintaining its heroine's POV for the first 90 minutes. We see, hear and know only what Mellie sees, hears and knows, and we feel as she feels. Our identification with her situation is total, and it's why the film is so disorienting, sometimes perverse."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Tom Stockman, editor of the We Are Movie Geeks website.

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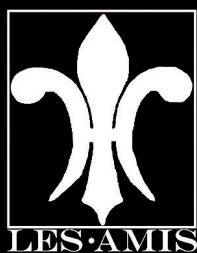
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