

The Museum of Modern Art

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Note to critics and editors:
Screenings in advance on request

FRENCH FILMS ON TOUR PRESENTED BY MUSEUM PRIOR TO SHOWINGS AT AMERICAN CAMPUSES

French Films on Tour is a special program designed by the French Cultural Services and the French Film Office and presented by The Museum of Modern Art to introduce works that have not been shown as yet in this country. The series of seven films, imported for this occasion, to be shown from January 26 to February 1, includes two first features, "Valparaiso, Valparaiso," by Pascal Aubier, and "Ça Va, Ça Vient," by Pierre Barouh, a former actor, singer and record producer. A well known writer represented in the series is Jean-Claude Carrière, who has worked with Luis Bunuel and whose picture, "L'Alliance," is among the chosen seven. Carrière stars in the film, which he adapted from his novel.

The program, scheduled to tour American universities following its Museum debut, features in addition "Peau d'Ane" by Jacques Rivette and "L'Amour Fou" of Jacques Demy, both of which received critical acclaim abroad.

"Peau d'Ane," with a star cast including Catherine Deneuve, Jacques Perrin, Jean Marais and Delphine Seyrig, is based on the fairy tale by Charles Perrault, creator of "Cinderella." It was produced by Mag Bodard, one of the few woman producers in France, who sees cinema "as an art of synthesis, uniting painting, literature, and life." Her films include "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg," which, like "Peau d'Ane," was directed by Demy who knows "how to weave a poetic spell out of dreams, words, music and color." Demy is also known for a unique joie de vivre that endows even ordinary circumstances with magic.

"We should be pure in heart and that is why we need to hear the story of 'Peau d'Ane,'" says Demy. The director, reports Variety, "has always been drawn to the fragility of happiness in his films." Here, according to the trade journal, he "kicks around that old bugaboo of incest but on a most indulgent level." Variety also comments on the "graceful color, witty script, the right playing music and subtle special effects... all combine to make this a disarming fantasy. Demy has pulled off a charming film that avoids guile and quaintness." The cast includes Fernand Ledoux and Micheline Presle, both well known Parisian actors, with music contributed by Michel Legrand.

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"L'Amour Fou" is a four-hour film by the director of "La Religieuse" (The Nun) which, though based on the Diderot work, was banned in France for almost two years. In this his third film, Jacques Rivette deals with the on-stage life of a company rehearsing Racine's "Andromaque" and the off-stage private world of each of the individuals with their different hang-ups and complexes. The film operates on several levels-- the conscious, unconscious, theatrical, realistic-- and the reality is further complicated by the filming of a rehearsal for a television cinéma-vérité documentary.

While Rivette is not internationally renowned, he is considered a filmmaker's filmmaker, though he is said to lack the anarchic disputatiousness of Godard, the secretly tender appeal of Truffaut or the dashing vulgarity of Chabrol. He does display growing insights into human behavior, and Godard declares, "he knows the cinema better than I do." Rivette himself says "If the cinema has a social function, it is to confront people with ways of life and methods of thought other than their customary ones."

Many of the pictures have in common a concern with human relations or contemporary social mores and commitment. "Valparaiso, Valparaiso," for example, deals with a pseudo-revolution and is dedicated to "Alice in Wonderland" and "Gone With the Wind." It is described as a "poetic-political comedy," and its central character, played by Alain Cluny, is a jaded middle-aged leftist whose ideals are outmoded by present-day realities and politics. Pascal Aubier was 25 when he directed it.

Jean Rouch, who has never received adequate recognition in America, is responsible for "Petit à Petit," which is a satiric rendering of African reactions to the contradictions of progressive European countries and cultures. The picture contrasts the serious and facetious as the "Parisian tribes" are discovered and imponderable questions are raised about paternalistic whites and the black bourgeoisie. The players are permitted to improvise in this "comedy of manners" by a leading social film commentator, acclaimed for his early works "La Pyramide Humaine" and "Chronicle of a Summer." Rouch is a sociologist, ethnologist and filmmaker combined.

In "Solo," the director himself, Jean-Pierre Mocky, an actor who appeared in several films including "Orphée" and "God Needs Men," plays the leading role, a Bogart type hero. He is a cynic and a loner, who has compromised his ideals with the passage of time and now seeks to renew the purity of his radical youth. In the process he is caught in a succession of morbid, violent

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acts, and the film belongs to the genre the French call "la serie noir." Mocky, however, became known at first as a director of comedies featuring the popular French comic Bourvil. He had previously served as producer and co-adapter of a controversial literary work "La Tete Contre Les Murs," a dramatic study of disturbed people. "I like real people who do not trample on others' dignity," says Mocky, who admires American films that combine dynamics and ideas.

"L' Alliance," paralleling animal and human psyches, is a strange, mystical story of a couple trying to communicate, after meeting through a matrimonial agency. The man is a veterinarian interested in experiments and his wife leads a private life of her own, in competition with his psychic explorations. The original book was written by Jean-Claude Carrière who adapted it for the screen and plays the role of the husband opposite Anna Karina, in this off-beat study of human and animal behavior. Carrière had co-authored Bunuel's "Diary of a Chamber Maid," "Belle de Jour" and "The Milky Way." The director of "L' Alliance" is Christian de Chalonge, 34, who started in film working with Rene Clair and who has also assisted Tony Richardson. "L' Alliance" is his second film.

The films are scheduled as follows:

- PETIT A PETIT. 1970. By Jean Rouch. English titles. 105 min.
Wednesday, January 26, 2 pm and Tuesday, February 1, 5:30 pm.
- ÇA VA, ÇA VIENT. 1971. Directed by Pierre Barouh. English titles. 120 min.
Wednesday, January 26, 5:30 pm and Sunday, January 30, 2 pm.
- L'AMOUR FOU. 1968. Directed by Jacques Rivette. No English titles. 255 min.
Thursday, January 27, noon.
- VALPARAISO, VALPARAISO. 1971. By Pascal Aubier. With Alain Cluny, Bernadette Lafont.
English titles. 98 min.
Thursday, January 27, 5:30 pm and Friday, January 28, 2 pm.
- SOLO. 1970. By and with Jean-Pierre Mocky. No English titles. 90 min.
Thursday, January 27, 8 pm and Sunday, January 30, 5:30 pm.
- PEAU D' ANE. 1970. By Jacques Demy. Music by Michel Legrand. With Catherine Deneuve, Delphine Seyrig. English titles. 90 min.
Friday, January 28, 5:30 pm and Saturday, January 29, 3 pm.
- L' ALLIANCE. 1971. Directed by Christian de Chalonge; written by Jean-Claude Carrière. With Anna Karina. English titles. 100 min.
Saturday, January 29, 5:30 pm and Monday, January 31, 1 pm.

Additional information available from Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, and Mark Segal, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019. Tel: (212) 956 - 7296.