

STELLA ARTOIS

She is a thing of beauty

PHOTOGRAPH BY BERT STERN

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SECOND ANNUAL STELLA ARTOIS

Cinema St. Louis

French Film Festival

SEPTEMBER 17 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 19 2010 | WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY | BROWN HALL AUDITORIUM | SAINT LOUIS

Second Annual Stella Artois French Film Festival

September 17-19, 2010

Washington University Brown Hall Auditorium

Corner of Forsyth Boulevard and
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Co-presented by Cinema St. Louis and the Washington University Program in Film and Media Studies

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Cinema St. Louis, the presenter of the annual St. Louis International Film Festival, is pleased to celebrate the city's Gallic heritage and France's continuing cinematic vitality with its Second Annual Stella Artois French Film Festival.

This fest includes recent work by four of France's most significant directors and a quartet of classics by two French film masters, Jacques Tati and Jean Renoir.

Tickets are \$10 each; \$8 for students with valid and current photo ID, Cinema St. Louis members with valid membership cards, and Alliance Française members.

Tickets can be purchased in advance by calling the Cinema St. Louis office at 314.289.4153; tickets will be available for pickup at will call at the screening. Phone sales are limited to full-price tickets only; discounts can only be obtained in person at the box office because ID is required.

For more information, visit
www.cinemastlouis.org or call
314.289.4150.

All films are in French with English subtitles.

Friday, September 17



7 p.m.
Mr. Hulot's Holiday
(*Les vacances de Monsieur Hulot*),
Jacques Tati,
1953, 83 min.

A restored print of the Tati classic, "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" introduced the writer-director-star's signature character to the world. While on holiday at a seaside resort, Mr. Hulot - an endearing, pipe-smoking clown - finds his presence provoking one catastrophe after another. A gently funny satire of vacationers determined to enjoy themselves, the first entry in the Hulot series includes a series of brilliantly choreographed sight gags about boats, dogs, tennis, and other hazards of leisure.

Roger Ebert writes of "Mr. Hulot's Holiday": "It is not a comedy of hilarity but a comedy of memory, nostalgia, fondness and good cheer. There are some real laughs in it, but 'Mr. Hulot's Holiday' gives us something rarer, an amused affection for human nature - so odd, so valuable, so particular." And "Time Out" says of the sparkling black-and-white print: "This brand-new restoration of Tati's ode to the hazards of leisure makes the various misadventures look more drop-dead magnifique than ever."



9 p.m.
Around a Small Mountain (36 vues du Pic Saint Loup),
Jacques Rivette,
2009, 84 min.

In the newest film from French New Wave icon Jacques Rivette ("Céline and Julie Go Boating," "La Belle Noiseuse"), Vittorio (Sergio Castellitto), an Italian traveling through the Cévennes range in the south of France, assists Kate (Jane Birkin) with a stalled car on a mountain road. After learning that Kate is a tightrope walker en route to rejoining her family's one-ring circus, which she abandoned mysteriously years before, Vittorio becomes intrigued and stays for the show. He soon finds himself entranced by the circus life - including Kate and her aerialist daughter, Clémence (Julie-Marie Parmentier) - and abandons his own travels to follow the troupe.

The New York Times' A.O. Scott enthuses: "The film - a short, late minor gem from an octogenarian French master of long-form cinema - is as transporting and graceful as a ride in a balloon. It flows

effortlessly from scene to scene, the story floating on Mr. Rivette's gentle camera movement. Yet at the same time, like the work of Clémence and the other performers in her small, itinerant troupe, the film reflects meticulous discipline and unerring craft."

Saturday, September 18



3 p.m.
Eldorado
(*Eldorado Preljocaj*),
Olivier Assayas, 2008,
90 min.

A documentary about the creation of a ballet, "Eldorado" is the work of celebrated film director, screenwriter, and Cahiers du cinema critic Olivier Assayas, whose films include last year's acclaimed "Summer Hours" and the much-anticipated epic "Carlos," which debuted at Cannes in May. The film chronicles the evolution of a piece by renowned choreographer Angelin Preljocaj, whom the New York Times describes as "one of the most acclaimed choreographers to come out of the experimental-dance boom that erupted in France in the 1980s." Adding a third major artist to the mix, the dance is choreographed to "Sonntags Abschied," a composition for five synthesizers by the late Karlheinz Stockhausen, a pioneer of electronic music whom the Guardian declares "one of the great visionaries of 20th-century music."

Lifting the veil on the secrets of a dance piece's gestation, Assayas' "Eldorado" revealingly illuminates the means by which sound and music are transformed into gesture and movement. Describing the film, Times dance critic Gia Kourlas says that "the creative process unfolds as if it were a drama. Along with lively interviews with Stockhausen, filmed just before his death, there is extensive rehearsal footage, which begins with tight shots of Mr. Preljocaj rolling on the floor with his dancers."



5 p.m.
Playtime, Jacques Tati, 1967, 115 min.
Shown with Evening Classes (Cours du soir), Jacques Tati, 1967, 30 min.

Considered by many to be Jacques Tati's masterpiece, in which M. Hulot and a group of American tourists encounter a bewildering modern Paris, the ambitious "Playtime" required nearly three years to complete and forced the director to take a series of loans to cover its budget over-

runs. Using a massive, specially constructed set - known as "Tatville" - and shooting on 70mm film, Tati fills every corner of the film's generous frames with telling details and bits of comic business. Distinctly experimental in form, "Playtime" consists of six sequences linked only by the presence of Hulot and American tourist Barbara.

Film critic Kent Jones writes: "The film is a series of giddy encounters between people and things, the wonders of 'modern life' relinquishing their functionality in favor of an unaccountably rapturous beauty. Playtime indeed: an airport terminal, an office lobby, a hotel, an ideal home exhibition, an apartment complex and a jazzy restaurant, with their polished, reflective surfaces, form one continuous delirium of design, the impromptu playground for a group of American tourists and assorted locals, including Hulot himself and various doubles."

Made during the lengthy production of "Playtime," the rarely screened "Cours du soir (Evening Classes)" - shot by "Playtime" assistant director Nicolas Ribowski - is a gag-filled quasi-documentary that features Tati teaching a course on mime to a group of enthusiastic but less-than-expert students.



8:30 p.m.
The Doctor's Horrible Experiment (Le testament du Docteur Cordelier),
Jean Renoir, 1959,
95 min.

A rare, seldom-seen TV film from late in Jean Renoir's career, "The Doctor's Horrible Experiment" is a quirky spoof of horror movies that freely adapts "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." The film features "Children of Paradise" star Jean-Louis Barrault as the titular Dr. Cordelier, a psychiatrist coping with his own mental-health issues, and is "hosted" by Renoir, who introduces and concludes the film from a TV-studio set.

The Chicago Reader's Jonathan Rosenbaum singles out the lead actor for particular praise: "Barrault's performance in the title role - a retiring middle-class professor who, after inadvertently releasing the fury of his own id, delights in such activities as abusing cripples on the street - is one of the most sublime, disturbingly funny, and complex actorly creations ever committed to film."

Sunday, September 19



3 p.m.
Just Anybody
(*Le premier venu*),
Jacques Doillon
2008, 121 min.

In this drama from the director of "Ponette," Camille (Clémentine Beaugrand), a 20-something dissatisfied with her life, craves the opportunity to give her love to the person who needs it the most. She finds this opportunity when she follows one-night-stand Costa (Gérald Thomassin), a criminal drifter, to a coastal resort town in northwest France. Even as their relationship begins to take its toll on them both - complicated further by the attentions of local cop Cyril (Guillaume Saurel) - Camille finds happiness in her efforts to rescue Costa from his own self-destruction.

The Hollywood Reporter writes: "With its minimalist plot, witty dialogue and young characters in search for love, 'Just Anybody' represents the very essence of Jacques Doillon's cinema. Which means fans of the French director will love this deep dive into his obsessions.... Doillon shoots the interaction between his youngsters and the unexpected situations that arise from their confrontations in intriguing ways."



5:30 p.m.
Blue Beard
(*Barbe Bleue*),
Catherine Breillat,
2009, 80 min.

Based on Charles Perrault's grisly fairytale, "Bluebeard" tells the story of young Marie-Catherine (Lola Créton), child bride to an aristocratic ogre (Dominique Thomas) with a reputation for murdering his wives. Controversial director Catherine Breillat ("The Last Mistress," "Fat Girl," "Romance") brings her personal touch to this classic tale. Princess Marie-Catherine must employ all her cunning to outwit her husband and escape a potentially unpleasant fate.

J. Hoberman of the Village Voice says of the film: "Psychologically rich, unobtrusively minimalist, at once admirably straightforward and slyly comic, Catherine Breillat's 'Bluebeard' is a lucid retelling and simultaneous explanation of Charles Perrault's nastiest, most un-Disneyfiable nursery story.... Breillat, who prizes sexual curiosity above all and claims to have loved 'Bluebeard' as a child, gives the tale her own spin. The idiosyncratic artist

reimagines the perverse bedtime story as one of sibling rivalry, adding a measure of religion and soupçon of class awareness to the mix."



8 p.m.
French Cancan,
Jean Renoir,
1954, 102 min.

Nineteenth-century Paris comes vibrantly alive in Jean Renoir's exhilarating tale of the opening of the world-renowned Moulin Rouge. Jean Gabin plays the wily impresario Danglard, who makes the cancan all the rage while juggling the love of two beautiful women - an Egyptian belly-dancer (Maria Félix) and a naive working girl turned cancan star (Françoise Arnoul). This celebration of life, art, and the City of Light (with a cameo by Edith Piaf) is a Technicolor tour de force by a master of modern cinema.

Critic Andrew Sarris calls "French Cancan" "the happiest and most exuberant ripple in Renoir's career as a river of personal expression.... Only repeated viewings of Renoir's films uncover the inexorable logic and lucidity of his style. Still, of all his films, 'French Cancan' is the one that bursts out again and again with lyrical explosions of color, vitality, and sensuality. There is unmistakably more to Renoir than meets the eye, but what an eye he has."



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