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SEMBENE

Friday, March 28

THE FILMS OF OUSMANE SEMBENE
OUSMANE SEMBENE IN PERSON

IN WHEELER AUDITORIUM \$1.50

(Note: Although the Films of Mrinal Sen, with Mrinal Sen in Person, is confirmed at the time of this writing, these two programs with Ousmane Sembene are not 100% certain as of Feb. 25, so watch for coming announcements.)

BLACK GIRL and MANDABI (THE MONEY ORDER) 8:00

THE FILMS OF OUSMANE SEMBENE

OUSMANE SEMBENE IN PERSON

SATURDAY, MARCH 29 IN WHEELER AUD. \$1.50

TAUW and EMITAI 8:00

BLACK GIRL (Senegal, 1965, b&w, 60 min) March 28 8pm Wheeler Aud.
Ousmane Sembene is the first African director of world stature. Before taking up film-making at the age of 40, he had been a writer and Marseille dock-worker, and before that, in his native Senegal, Sembene worked as a fisherman, then a mason, then a mechanic. He studied film technique under Mark Donskoi at the Gorky Film Studio in Moscow. In 1963, he made a 16mm short in Mali, then his first 35mm short, BOROM SARRET, in his homeland. In 1965, he produced BLACK GIRL, the first black African feature-length film. Winner of the 1966 Prix Jean Vigo for Best Direction, BLACK GIRL tells the story of a young girl from Dakar who is hoodwinked into working as a domestic for an all-too-typical French middle-class family in Antibes. Once in France, where she is virtually imprisoned as a housemaid, Diouana despairs and commits suicide. The power and the economy with which Sembene films her life, her death (three stunning shots), and her (strictly moral) revenge reveal him not just a master of third world film, but simply a master.

MANDABI (Senegal, 1968, 90 mins, color, 35mm, English subtitles)

MANDABI is the first full-length feature by the first African film-maker of world stature, Ousmane Sembene. As such it is of obvious historical importance, but beyond this fact MANDABI is an excellent and authentically Senegalese motion picture. MANDABI is suffused in the street culture of Dakar: it reveals the society and culture of Senegal in many aspects; insofar as the evolving social relations in Senegal are observed in MANDABI, they are viewed critically, from a standpoint which takes full account of the country's colonized heritage. The story concerns an elderly family patriarch, a likably self-centered man of the old world with fragile pretensions to social distinction, who receives a money order from Europe, only to find himself faced with a maze of bureaucratic red tape to cash it. Finally the lawyer who helps him cash it winds up with the money order as his fee. The old man vows to become dishonest so that he can survive.

TAUW (Senegal, 1970, color, 27 min) March 29 8pm Wheeler Aud.

Set in Dakar, the film follows a male protagonist through a day in his life. It is a day in the life of his country as well. None of Sembene's male protagonists have jobs. All are looking. Tauw has nothing to hire out but his body and soul, but to get onto a dock where he might get a day's work, he must buy a gate-pass with a hundred francs he doesn't have. A single pan in TAUW as he and his friends make their way to the docks brilliantly expresses the social and economic horizons in Dakar. Curiously, TAUW was produced by the National Council of Churches of Christ: it does include an effective illustration of one reactionary facet of Islam, but suggests Marx rather than Christ as the answer for Senegal.

EMITAI (Senegal, 1972, color, 101 mins)

A village in the south of Senegal ineffectually resists the soldiers who come to seize its rice during the second World War to supply the French army. The elders allow their sons to be dragged off to war, but to surrender the rice would dishonor their gods. But the very presence of the soldiers indicates that the gods are dead: the village is defenseless. Thus Sembene's concern is less with colonialist oppression or heroic resistance, than with the vulnerability of traditional African beliefs.