

Document Citation

Title	The films of François Truffaut
Author(s)	Wendy Cheshire
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	32, 33
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	Truffaut, François (1932-1984), Paris, France
Film Subjects	Jules et Jim, Truffaut, François, 1962 Les quatre cents coups (The 400 blows), Truffaut, François, 1959 Tirez sur le pianiste (Shoot the piano player), Truffaut, François, 1960

The films of François Truffaut

Truffaut became firmly established as a director in the forefront of the *nouvelle vague* movement with the appearance of his first feature *Les Quatre Cents Coups* at Cannes in 1959 where it carried away the prize for best direction and the American film critics award for the best foreign film of that year. Godard was then able to use Truffaut's name as scriptwriter to get financial backing for his first feature, *A Bout de Souffle*, but soon after this Truffaut and the *nouvelle vague* parted company. Whereas Godard's films became progressively freer in style, Truffaut preferred, apart from drawing from his own personal experiences, as in the Doinel series, to adapt from other people's work. He has in fact been quoted as saying "the worst thing, when you are the complete author of a film, is that you are more troubled with doubts" which is the complete antithesis of what the conception of *nouvelle vague* stood for in the early 60's.

His films seem to fall into two categories. Those which are fairly straightforward in style, and somewhat autobiographical in content, with that delicate balance of tragedy and comedy which gives a feeling of reality to the films; and those which are based on someone else's material, in which Truffaut uses more visual tricks to tell a story. Many of the latter reflect his fascination with the gangster/thriller genres, and his great admiration for Hitchcock. I would say that the films in the first category are the most successful of Truffaut's films, but this season in which we are screening all but his latest films (hopefully his most recent, *Les Deux Anglaises et le Continent*, will open this spring), will give a wide audience the chance to compare the two aspects of his work in a related context.—

Wendy Cheshire.



Wed 3 May 6.30. 8.45

Tirez Sur Le Pianiste

Tirez sur le Pianiste is a cult picture: a parody of a gangster film with an implausible plot about a one-time concert musician, now a pub pianist (Charles Aznavour), who becomes involved with two highly unlikely gunmen who are chasing his brother. The film comes as a surprise after *400 Blows*; it's full of visual jokes, veering between spontaneity and stylisation, and the unexpected always seems to be happening. With *Les Mistons* (1957), Truffaut's first short film. France 1960 / Dir François Truffaut. With Charles Aznavour, Nicole Berger, Marie Dubois.



Fri 5 May 6.30. 8.45

Jules et Jim

A lyrical film, set in the Paris of 1910, about a triangular relationship between two young men, Jules and Jim, and a girl they meet on holiday in Greece, Catherine. Truffaut and his inventive cameraman Raoul Coutard use an endless variety of visual devices to reveal the shifting relationships of the trio in a delightful blend of comedy and tragedy. France 1961 / Dir François Truffaut. With Oskar Werner, Henri Serre, Jeanne Moreau.

