

## Document Citation

Title	<b>17 years later</b>
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	La ronde, Ophüls, Max, 1950

## 17 Years Later

**LA RONDE**, screenplay by Jacques Natanson and Max Ophuls, based on Arthur Schnitzler's play "Reigen"; directed by Mr. Ophuls; produced by Sacha Gokine; distributed by Janus Films. At the New York Film Festival, Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center. Running time: 97 minutes.

The Narrator .....	Anton Walbrook
The Whore .....	Simone Signoret
The Soldier .....	Serge Reggiani
The Chambermaid .....	Simone Simon
The Young Man .....	Daniel Gelin
The Married Lady .....	Danielle Darrieux
The Husband .....	Fernand Gravey
The Grisette .....	Odette Joyeux
The Poet .....	Jean-Louis Barrault
The Actress .....	Isa Miranda
The Lieutenant .....	Gerard Philippe

**A**FTER 17 years in the wilderness, and with the restoration of some footage idiotically cut for its first New York run, Max Ophuls's "La Ronde" returned last night via the New York Film

Festival. "La Ronde," made in 1950, is the first of Ophuls's last four movies (the others are "Le Plaisir"—1951 "Madame de . . ."—1953 and "Lola Montes — 1955), which, together with the 1950's movies of Jean Renoir, constitute the two most sustained creative achievements in the history of film.

Last year the festival presented "Lola Montes," virtually rescued from oblivion by the brilliant proselytizing of the Village Voice film critic, Andrew Sarris. This year we have "La Ronde," which, if less great than "Lola Montes," is, on the other hand, more gracious and a more accessible introduction to the style and vision of Max Ophuls.

Sometimes there seems to be so much style it is hard to accept the existence of a vision in Ophuls's movies. Undeniably he is the greatest ornamentalist among directors. Not only in the decorative density and the spatial surprises of his sets (the first sexual game of "La Ronde" is played up and down tremendous flights of steps; the second is observed through a foreground profusion of shrubs and branches) but also in his dedication to elaborate camera movement, Ophuls complicates everything that happens in his films. The point to remember is that all of the grand gestures and arabesques indicate form and discipline—and not mere indulgence in sensual excess.

More readily apparent is Ophuls's unfailing gracefulness and delicacy. He never attempts to upset the vital balance of illusions in his opulent world (though the opulence may be no more than the play of a few lights on painted backdrops—as he openly shows it to be in "La Ronde") and he never ridicules his often trivial characters. Something akin to deeply ingrained very good manners is at work here, and the reward, as always in Ophuls, is that the unbearable becomes bearable and for a moment even humanly attractive it is no accident, and no inconsiderable virtue, that the loveliest kitsch movie music ever written occurs in the last four films of Max Ophuls.