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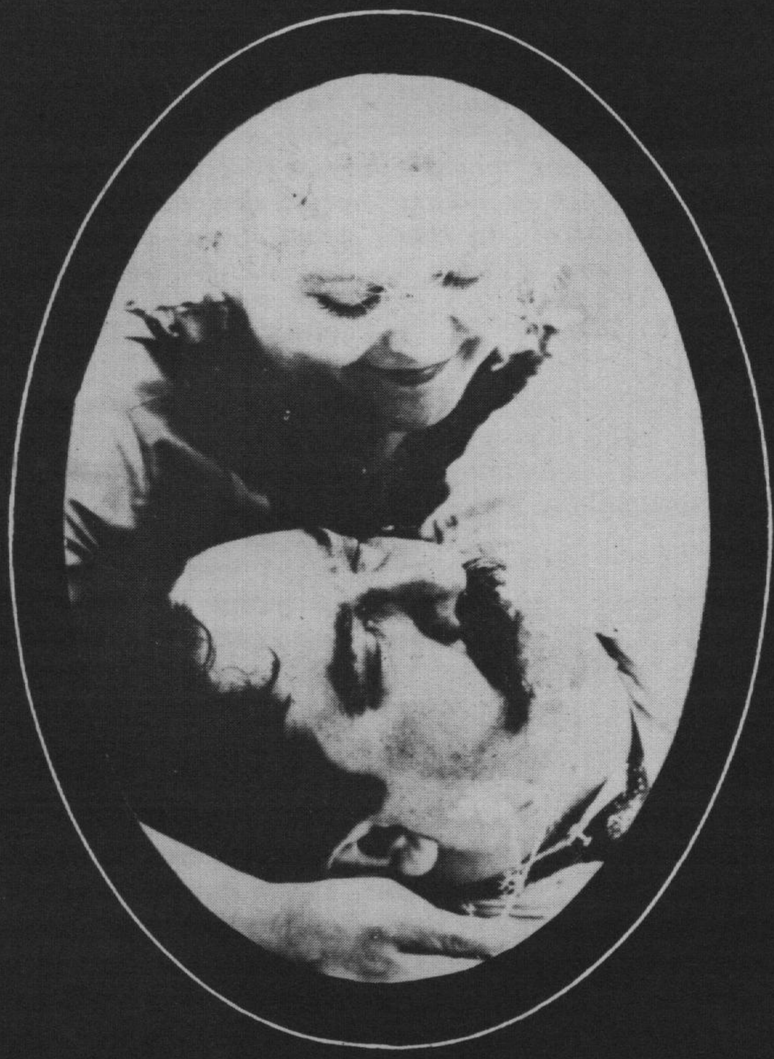

THE FILMS OF JEAN RENOIR

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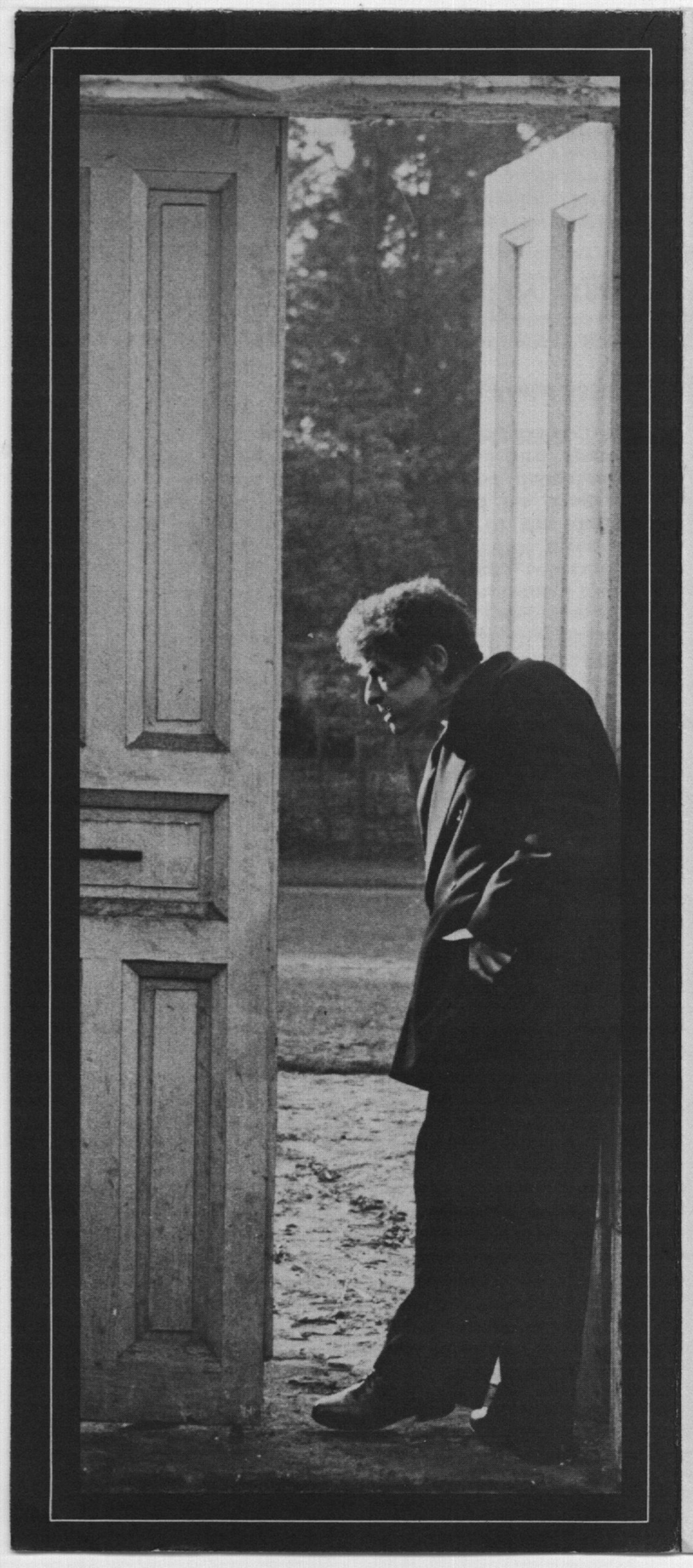

Boudu Saved From Drowning (1932)

(Boudu sauve des eaux)

Written and directed by Jean Renoir. Produced by Michel Simon, Jean Gehret. From the play by Rene Fauchois. Assistant Director—Jacques Becker. Photographer—Marcel Lucien Asselin. Editor—Suzanne de Troyes. Music—Rapheael. With Michel Simon, Charles Grandval, Marcelle Hainia, Severine Lerczynska, Jean Daste, Max Dalban, Jean Gehret, Jacques Becker. French with English subtitles.

Boude, alas, is not the tramp the middle class would like him to be. He defies rehabilitation. Saved from suicide by drowning, he is invited into the home of his new found savior, soon to be benefactor, a very middle class French book shop owner. But Boudu does not act the way we'd like, or expect him to act. He spills wine on the table, leaves the water running in the sink, and prefers to sleep on the floor rather than the bed. The harder the bookseller tries, the more obstinate Boudu becomes. He seduces both the bookseller's wife and his maid. But the end appears to be in sight, for Boudu becomes engaged to the maid. Respectability at last. But not for long, for shortly after their marriage, as all the guests are waving their good-byes, Boudu makes a most dramatic exit.

"Renoir's camera reveals the actors as if they were there naturally or inadvertently—not arranged for a shot but found by the camera on the streets, in the shop, on the banks of the Seine . . . . Boudu provides not only a fresh encounter with the movie past, but also a photographic record of an earlier France, which moved in a different rhythm."—**Pauline Kael, THE NEW REPUBLIC**

Code 406170 — 87 minutes — B&W

Rental: $60 (Classroom)
$100 (Announced or admission charged*)

Also available in 35 mm.

Madame Bovary (1934)

Direction and Screenplay by Jean Renoir, after the novel by Gustave Flaubert. Photographed by J. Bachelet. Decor by E. Lourie, R. Gys. Costumes by Medgyes. Music by Darius Milhaud. Montage by Marguerite Houlle-Renoir, Max Dearly, Daniel Lecourtois, Fernand Fabre, Alice Tissot, Helena Manson, Pierre Larquey, Robert Le Vigan, Edmond Beauchamp. Filmed at Paris-Studio-Cinema, Autumn 1933. Exteriors at Regic de Rouen and Lyons-la-Foret, August 1933. In French with English subtitles.

MADAME BOVARY is Renoir's fifth sound film, produced just before he made TONI. George Sadoul, in FRENCH CINEMA, points out that because of the financial failure of LA CHIENNE (1931), Renoir was forced to accept vehicles not necessarily of his own choice. While BOUDU SAVED FROM DROWNING (1932) was a film Renoir wanted to make, it too lost money.

Time and time again Renoir would return to the past for themes for his films. There are few directors anywhere who could bridge the gap as gracefully as Renoir, and MADAME BOVARY is proof of his rare ability to evoke the mood and the feeling of an era that no one in the audience could possibly know or remember. And yet Renoir emerses the viewer with such consummate skill, that he creates a whole world in a film, and rather than an observer you become a participant.

"...It is only recently, now that the cinema has, as it were, grown up to him, that his (Renoir's) films have been appreciated to the full. Thirty years ago Renoir was putting his camera outside a doorway, leaving it stationary while people moved in and out of the room, in and out of the frame; shooting in towards a world existing beyond the camera rather than filming a scene put on for its benefit. He was shooting out in the country, so that in his MADAME BOVARY, during a drive down a country lane, you can almost feel a shiver of cold as the sky darkens for rain." — **Penelope Houston, THE CONTEMPORARY CINEMA**

Code 408445 — 102 minutes — B&W

Rental: $60 (Classroom)
$100 (Announced or admission charged*)

Toni (1934)

Directed by Jean Renoir. Screenplay by Jean Renoir and Carl Einstein, from the novel "Toni," by J. Levert. Photographed by Claude Renoir and R. Leduc. Edited by Marguerite Renoir and Suzanne de Troyes. Music by Bozzi. Produced by Les Films-Marcel Pagnol. Very difficult French with English subtitles. With Charles Blavette, Jenny Helia, Celia Montalvan, Delmont, Andrex, Delban, Kobachevitch.

The plot, the action of TONI is the stuff of which soap operas are made. And in less skillful hands than Renoir's it might have turned out to be just that. But the essential difference between TONI and "Secret Storm" is the crucial difference between art and artifice—for art is the embodiment of involvement, concern, genius, and inspiration. Toni, a Spanish farm worker of the 1930's, comes to Provence to find work, and along with work he finds a woman who loves him (and attempts suicide because of him); a woman he loves, Josepha, marries another—and kills him when he beats her; and Toni's efforts to save Josepha from being caught lead to his own death.

TONI is one of Renoir's most highly-regarded motion pictures in Europe, where it is considered the most important precursor of neorealism. Godard, Truffaut, Resnais and many other great French directors have called themselves "the children of TONI."

"In 1934, Jean Renoir made TONI, photographed by his nephew Claude Renoir . . . . Viewed historically or not, it is still one of the most remarkable achieve-

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ments of realism in the cinema . . . The film is full of wonderful things—the sense of a dying relationship in bedroom scenes between Toni and Marie, a baby howling during a quarrel about money in a poor kitchen, the sounds of motorbike engines and a funeral bell and a guitar intervening disconnectedly on the track. TONI is a monument to Renoir's undying preoccupation with meetings and intruders. How to enter, how to belong. . . "
—Penolope Gilliatt, THE NEW YORKER
Code 408153 — 90 minutes — B&W
Rental: $60 (Classroom)
$100 (Announced or admission charged*)
Also available in 35 mm.

A Day in the Country
(1936)

Direction, Screenplay and Dialogue by Jean Renoir, from the story by Guy De Maupassant. Photography by Claude Renoir. Music by Joseph Kosma. Edited by Marguerite Renoir. With Sylvia Bataille, Georges Darnoux, Gabriello, Jeanne Marken, Paul Temps, Jacques Brunius, Jean Renoir, Pierre Lestringuez, Marguerite Renoir. French with English subtitles.

For Renoir, the making of this film must have been a labor of love, it's so full of the details of the famous canvasses of his father, Auguste. Even the positions and attitudes of the actors, not to mention the costumes and sets, make it seem as if an Auguste Renoir canvas has come to life. The son has brought a new dimension to the work of the father, by placing before us the gaiety and joy in living that we always sense in a painting by Renoir.

"An innocent young girl comes of age in Jean Renoir's short . . . film . . . This lyric tragedy rates with Renoir's greatest (LA GRANDE ILLUSION, LA REGLE DU JEU). Visually, it recaptures the impressionist period; in tone, it accomplishes a transformation from light nostalgic comedy to despair. In the late 1800's a merchant (Gabriello) takes his family for an outing on the banks of the Marne; there his wife (Jeanne Marken) and his daughter (Sylvia Bataille) are seduced—the one delightedly, the other tremblingly, like a captured bird. Renoir plays the Innkeeper." — Pauline Kael, KISS KISS BANG BANG
Code 406372 — 37 minutes — B&W — Rental $35.00
Also available in 35 mm.

The Lower Depths (1936)
(Les Bas fonds)

Directed by Jean Renoir. Screenplay by Eugene Zomiatine, based on the play by Maxim Gorky. Dialogue by Jean Renoir and Charles Spaak. Score by Jean Wiener. With Jean Gabin, Louis Jouvet, Vladimir Sokoloff, Suzy Prim, Jany Holt, Junie Astor. French dialogue with English subtitles.

At the core of THE LOWER DEPTHS is a problem that Renoir has grappled with in some of his best films: what happens to people when they are thrust into an environment which is actively conspiring to destroy them. Renoir said of THE LOWER DEPTHS, *"I have not tried to make a Russian film, I have made a human drama...I have tried to make a bitter and tender picture of the very soul of that 'poem on the loss of class' that Gorky wrote thirty-four years ago—its nostalgia, its humor, its mocking jests."*

"Jean Renoir transcribed the Maxim Gorky play so that those two poles of French acting style—Gabin and Jouvet—act magnetically...(This movie has one of those great moments that people talk about for years afterward: the scene when Jouvet comes away from the gaming tables and cannot light his cigarette. It was, for the thirties, like Belmondo rubbing his lips in BREATHLESS)" — Pauline Kael, KISS KISS BANG BANG
Code 406914 — 91 minutes — B&W
Rental: $50 (Classroom)
$75 (Announced or admission charged*)
Also available in 35 mm.

La Marseillaise (1938)

Direction, Screenplay and Dialog by Jean Renoir. Financed by public subscription. Photographed by Jean Bourgoin and Alain Douarinou. Sets Designed by Leon Barsacq, Georges Wakhevitch. Music by Joseph Kosma, Sauveplane. Edited by Marguerite Renoir. With Pierre Renoir, Louis Jouvet, Acquistapace, Spinelly, Jacque Catelain, Aime Clairond, Gaston Modot. French with English subtitles.

Jean Renoir's remarkable ability to recreate the mood of the past—his unyielding concern with showing life as it really was—was never more evident than in LA MARSEILLAISE. A classic tribute to the glory of the French Revolution, the film captures the personal flavor of the struggle and the philosophical background to the revolutionary upheaval. In a rapid series of vignettes, we are introduced to the elegance and nobility of Louis XVI and his court...the contrasting plight of French peasants governed by laws they cannot understand...the storming of the Bastille ...rebellion in Marseilles...the plotting of France's exiled nobility to return to power...the Republican march on Paris...and the capture of the Tuileries in 1793, ending the Revolution — all underscored by a "central rhythmic line the song...adopted from the Army of the Rhine...which became known as La Marseillaise."

"...it is one of Renoir's finest efforts, part of the amazingly productive and magnificent period from 1933 to 1939...LA MARSEILLAISE is the link between the engaged, often turbulent Renoir of the thirties and the taut, detached philosopher-artist Renoir of the fifties."—John Bragin, FILM SOCIETY REVIEW
London Film Festival 1968
Code 407828 — 131 minutes — B&W
Rental: $50 (Classroom)
$75 (Announced or admission charged*)
Also available in 35 mm.

Elena et les Hommes
(1956)
(Elena and the Men)

Direction and Screenplay by Jean Renoir. Adaptation and Dialogue by Jean Renoir and Jean Serge. **Photographed by Claude Renoir. Set Designs by Jean Andre. Costumes by Rosine Delamare, Monique Plotin. Music by Joseph Kosma. Edited by Boris Lewin. Produced by Franco London Films/Films Gibe/Electra Compania Cinematografica. With Ingrid Bergman, Jean Marais, Mel Ferrer, Jean Richard, Magali Noel, Juliette Greco, Gaston Modot, Albert Remy, Pierre Bertin. French with English subtitles.**

In 1946, Ingrid Bergman asked Jean Renoir to make a film for her. It took ten years for Renoir to find the proper vehicle for Miss Bergman, and the result is a film about the power of love, the power of women, the folly of progress, the beauty of laziness, and the evil of dictators—all combined in a style that Renoir calls "une fantaisie musicale."

The original idea for the film was quite serious: General Boulanger's bid for dictatorial power in the 1880's. But Renoir soon strayed from historical authenticity, and instead turned to "a freer, more lighthearted approach." Princess Elena (Ingrid Bergman) is a Polish princess living in Paris, who toys with the idea of gaining power through the Minister of War, General Rollan (Jean Marais). She is at first willing to give up her true lover, the elegant Henri de Chevincourt (Mel Ferrer), but in the end love conquers all and Elena returns to Henri and gives up her vicarious quest for power.

"ELENA ET LES HOMMES has much in common with the previous (Renoir) films . . . It also bears some resemblance to LA REGLE DU JEU in that it is a comedy of manners with chateau-set scenes of amorous interchange of partners among the rich and their servants . . .

" The characteristic elements of the later Renoir are all here: color and movement, good humour spilling over into awkward farce and a wildly satirical look at the rich and ambitious . . ."—Roy Armes, FRENCH CINEMA SINCE 1946, Volume I
Code 408406 — 98 minutes — Color
Rental: $60 (Classroom)
$100 (Announced or admission charged*)
Also available in 35 mm.

The Testament of Dr. Cordelier (1959)
(Le Testament du Cordelier)

Direction and Screenplay by Jean Renoir, inspired by the novel by Robert Louis Stevenson, DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE. Photographed by Georges Leclerc. Design by Marcel Louis Dielot. Music by Joseph Kosma. Edited by Renee Lichtig. With Jean-Louis Barrault, Michel Vitold, Teddy Bilis, Andre Certes, Jacques Dannoville, Jean Topart, Jacqueline Morane, Micheline Gary. French with English subtitles.

"After a series of films that were basically spectacles, depending largely on colour, music and stars, Renoir virtually abandoned cinema in favour of the theatre for three years and when he did return he sought inspiration from television methods. THE TESTAMENT OF DR. CORDELIER was produced in collaboration with the French television service and it was its dual identity as television drama and feature film that aroused so much controversy and delayed its release. The story is not an original one, being a version of DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE set in contemporary Paris and starring Jean-Louis Barrault in the double role of Cordelier-Opale. The film as originally planned was to have been transmitted live, but this proved impossible (largely because of Barrault's make-up). Renoir clung to his idea of spontaneity, and LE TESTAMENT was filmed scene by scene (not shot by shot) and only ten days were needed for shooting, after a fortnight's rehearsal. Each scene was played only once and recorded by up to eight cameras and twelve microphones. From the resulting mass of material Renoir and his editor pieced the film together, adding a musical score by Joseph Kosma.... Barrault shows his versatility in his double role—the pale austere figure of Dr. Cordelier contrasts with the dark, contorted silhouette of Opale." — Roy Armes, FRENCH CINEMA SINCE 1946
Code 408479 — 90 minutes — B&W
Rental: $75 (Classroom)
$125 (Announced or admission charged*)
Also available in 35 mm.

Picnic on the Grass (1959)
(Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe)

A film by Jean Renoir, music by Joseph Kosma, photographed by Georges Leclerc, with Paul Meurisse, Catherine Rouvel, Jacqueline Morane. French dialogue with English subtitles. Recommended featurette: A Day in the Country

"A French import, PICNIC ON THE GRASS, which was written, produced, and directed by Jean Renoir, is as much fun as a barrelful of monkeys and makes just about as much sense. It's a radically imperfect work, but since its imperfections are nearly all enchanting, I refuse to say a word against them. I'm convinced that M. Renoir hadn't the slightest notion of where he was heading in this picture from one day's shooting to the next; the results are a triumphant vindication of the artist as improviser. For M. Renoir is an artist, and his intention here, like Chaplin's in his earlier comedies, isn't to make sense but to give delight. His camera tells us that he believes ardently in the life force, wherever it may be found—in insects, trunks of trees, water flowing among grasses, above all in the bodies of men and women—and if the terms of which PICNIC ON THE GRASS celebrates life are entirely farcical the fault is ours; civilization requires us to laugh at what it forbids us to enjoy.

"Disingenuously, I've put off mentioning the plot of the picture, which is sure to sound awful. A stuffy, aristocratic professor of science, bent upon popularizing artificial insemination as a means of improving the human animal, gives a picnic in Provence for his equally stuffy and aristocratic fiancee; helping to serve the picnic party is an exuberant Provencal peasant girl, whose primary interest in life is having babies—she little cares by whom. Soon a wandering shepherd, complete with goat and flute, strikes up a tune, the mistral starts to blow, and the professor and the peasant girl are literally hurled into each other's arms. From that point on, what happens is just whatever happens. The professor is played by Paul Meurisse and the peasant girl by Catherine Rouvel. The Provencal setting, filmed in color, is fantastically beautiful; as Yeats once wrote of another place, 'That is no country for old men.'."—NEW YORKER
Code 407191 — 91 minutes — Color
Rental: $60 (Classroom)
$100 (Announced or admission charged*)
Also available in 35 mm.

The Elusive Corporal
(1962)
(Le Caporal epingle)

Direction by Jean Renoir. Screenplay and Dialogue by Jean Renoir, Guy LeFranc, from the novel by Jacques Perret. Photography by Georges Leclerc. Set Designs by Wolf Witzmann. Music by Joseph Kosma. Edited by Renee Lichtig. With Jean-Pierre Cassel, Claude Brasseur, Claude Rich, O.E. Hasse, Jean Carmet, Conny Froboess, Sacha Briquet. French with English subtitles.

At the age of 68, after nearly forty years in film, and after 35 feature films, Jean Renoir directed THE ELUSIVE CORPORAL. Renoir's reputation and stature as a director was established during the 30's, particularly by such films as THE LOWER DEPTHS, LA GRANDE ILLUSION, THE RULES OF THE GAME and TONI. Renoir said in 1950 that *"before the war my way of participating in this universal concert was to try to bring a voice of protest."* But the war years changed his attitude, so that today he says *"the new being that I am realises that it is no longer time for sarcasm and that the only thing I can bring to this illogical, irresponsible and cruel universe is my 'love'."*

The film consists of six unsuccessful attempted escapes by the corporal (Jean-Pierre Cassel) and Pater (Claude Brasseur). Their escape attempts are usually farcical, due mostly to lack of planning and rotten luck. But on the seventh attempt they make it to freedom.

"One of the most delightful of comedies. With grace and the quiet skill of a man in command of his medium, Renoir has given us another major comment on his and our times, a sensitive and always civilized view of the value of gallantry." — Paul Beckley, NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
Code 406450 — 90 minutes — B&W
Rental: $60 (Classroom)
$100 (Announced or admission charged*)
Also available in 35 mm.

Direction d'Acteur (1970)
Jean Renoir at Work Today

Here we have the rare privilege of observing master filmmaker Jean Renoir at work, adapting to the screen the Rumer Godden story, *Breakfast with the Nicolaides.* He works with actress Gisele Braunberger towards that perfect wedding between actress and text that is distinctive in his films. Beginning with an "expressionless" reading of the text to avoid presuppositions, Renoir gently leads Gisele deeper and deeper into a girl's dramatic confrontation with her mother, a key scene in the film. As we witness the finished product, the fullness with which we are caught up into her drama is a testimony to Renoir's goal: "a great film is one in which a character is discovered, and so becomes an original."

Gisele Braunberger has directed an effective and fascinating film, in spite of her involvement with Renoir's acting suggestions. An unobtrusive camera records, through continued repetitions, the transfer of subtle tensions between Renoir and Gisele into the tensions of the character she is playing...or should we say "becoming"?

Directed by Gisele Braunberger. Presented by Pierre Braunberger.
Code 408465 — 23 minutes — Color
Sale $305 — Rental $26

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THE FILMS OF JEAN RENOIR

Recently, on a late-night television show, the host asked Orson Welles, "if you could save only one movie, which one would you save?" Welles' answer was "Any film from Jean Renoir." On another talk show Welles was asked what the ten best movies of all time were. He remarked that at least five of them would be by Jean Renoir. Renoir, the son of the great Impressionist painter of the nineteenth century, the film maker who painted movies onto the screen, has been recognized by both audiences and critics as one of the greatest film makers of all time — some say even the greatest.

These films are the work of a great director...they are a continuing record of man's need for freedom, for love, for sunlight and simple pleasures. Renoir can become satirical when he sees these drives and pleasures being subverted whether by science as in *Picnic on the Grass* or by social conventions as in *Boudou Saved from Drowning.* But his films are usually an affirmation of man's unconquerable spirit, even against the odds of war as in *Grand Illusion* and one of his recent films, *The Elusive Corporal.* His films are a celebration of this spirit and are steeped in it. Words like "tenderness" and "wisdom" and "compassion", as misused as they have been, are the only ones appropriate to Renoir's cinema — indeed his films remind us of the words' true significance.

RENOIR'S CONTEMPORARY FILMOGRAPHY

Boudu Saved From Drowning (1932)
Madame Bovary (1934)
Toni (1934)
A Day in the Country (1936)
The Lower Depths (1936)
La Marseillaise (1938)
Elena et les Hommes (1956)
Le Testament du Docteur Cordelier (1959)
Picnic on the Grass (1959)
The Elusive Corporal (1962)
Direction d'Acteur

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