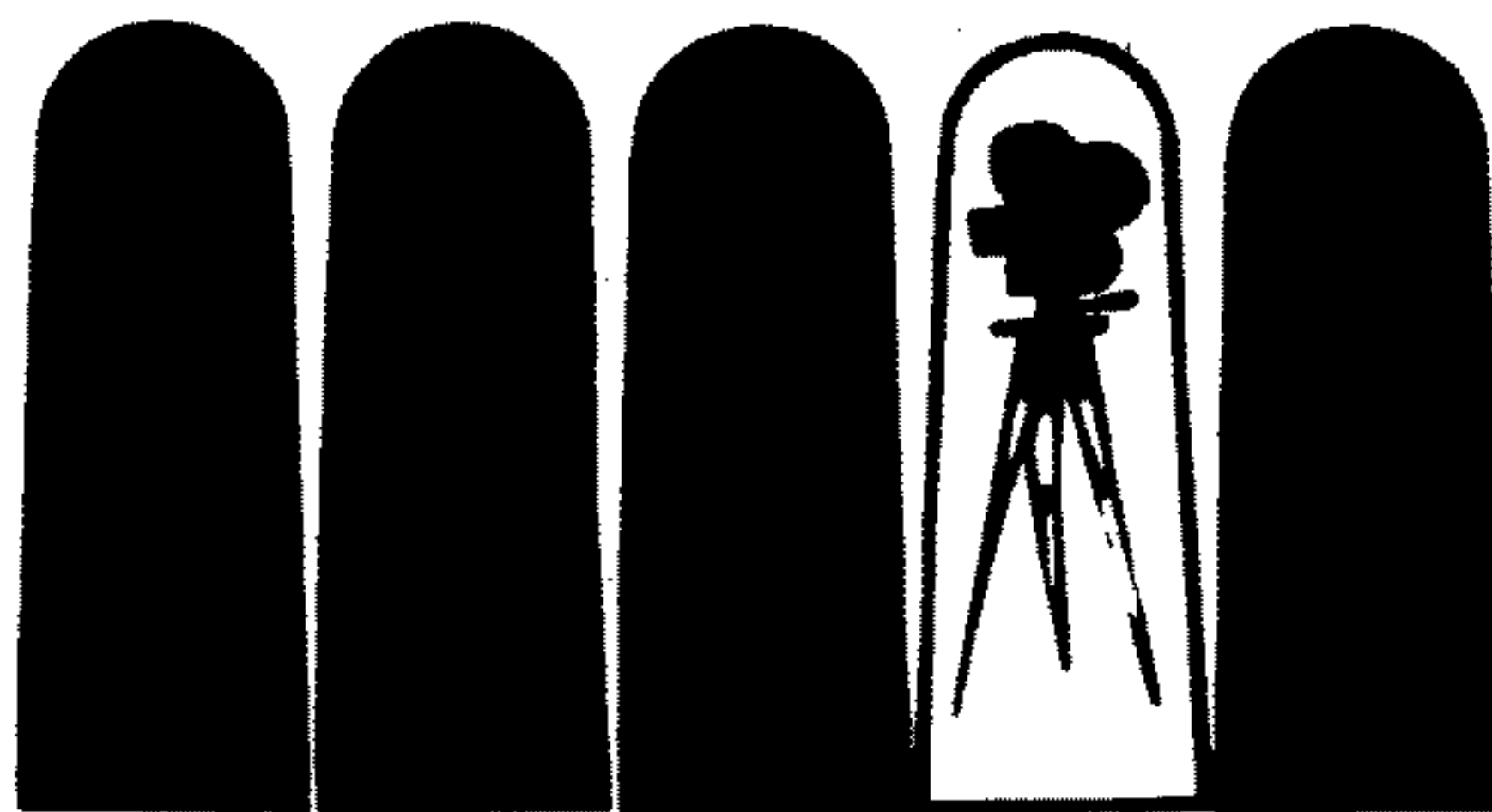


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THE DARTMOUTH



DAILY FILM PROGRAM

1963

"A series of coordinated feature films selected and designed for the purpose of illuminating some facet of film history such as: the works of a director or producer, the western, the mystery drama, science-fiction, propaganda, social problems, biography, etc., to be presented at no cost to the student body for the inherent vicarious educational experience."

MOULIN ROUGE (1952) (British)

Toulouse-Lautrec	Jose Ferrer	Valentino Dessosse	Walter Crisham
Marie	Colette Marchand	Mme. Loubet	Mary Clare
Myriamme	Suzanne Flon	Maurice	Lee Montague
Jane Avril	Zsa Zsa Gabor	Zilder	Harold Gasket
La Goulue	Katherine Kath	Sarah	Jill Bennett
Comtesse de Toulouse-		Pere Cotelie	Jim Gerald
Lautrec	Claude Nollier	Chocolat	Rupert John
Aicha	Muriel Smith	Aich's Partner	Tutti Lemkow
Patou	Georges Lannes	Lautrec's father	Jose Ferrer

Script by Anthony Veiller and John Huston, adapted from the novel of the same name by Pierre La Mure. Photographed by Oswald Morris in Technicolor. Edited by Ralph Kemplin. Music by Georges Auric. Costumes by Marcel Vertes. Art direction by Paul Sheriff. A John Huston Production for Romulus Films. Associate producer, Jack Clayton.

Directed by JOHN HUSTON.

MOULIN ROUGE was Huston's second European film, made after THE AFRICAN QUEEN (1952, not 1955 as stated in the booklet by error) and before BEAT THE DEVIL (1954). It was photographed in part in France, with some of the most remarkable technicolor photography ever developed, opening new techniques which truly revolutionized the film industry.

In order to recreate the period of the artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Huston decided that something radical was necessary. He hired a well-known still photographer from Life magazine to work with the remarkable cameraman Oswald Morris, and the two men came up with a whole series of new color effects which are as startling as they were valid to the subject. Huston, as a general rule, is a director who believes in never letting the camera angles get in the way of the story; his usual technique is so simple that one, properly, never notices it. However, in MOULIN ROUGE, he threw off his customary reserve and utilized many camera tricks which fortunately come off to perfection.

Unfortunately, it becomes obvious that Huston is really not very interested in his leading character. In real life, Toulouse-Lautrec was far from the gloomy dipsomaniac of the film. If he did drink, he at least enjoyed it. Contemporary reports agree that, despite his deformity, he was a charming and delightful person who made the best of the disability and led, at least until his last years, a thoroughly enjoyable life. It was a pity that the novel of Pierre La Mure was used as the basis of the film for, while it gives plenty of opportunity to three beautiful actresses, it plays havoc with historical truth.

The critics were almost unanimous in their criticism of the film and its acting, although the photography was praised. In the popular parlor game of "When did Huston's career begin to go downhill?" MOULIN ROUGE is the most frequent answer. Gavin Lambert called the script "glib and misleading." Penelope Huston wondered how "Huston managed to make such a flat, stolid film out of such promising material." Eugene Archer in his long study of Huston brings up some good points. "Unfortunately, while the form remains, the substance soon vanishes. In concentrating on mobile visual images, Huston neglected their motivational purpose, and, in a superficially acted script, the figures remain pencil sketches on an oil canvas. The battle of form and content is finally shadow-play."

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This is not to deny that MOULIN ROUGE is an exciting film and often good entertainment. Its enormous popularity would seem to stem from audience memories of certain exquisite scenes. How many viewers of the original release could remember now just what the story was all about? The color and the careful recreations of certain paintings linger in the mind for years, when the almost non-existent framework which surrounds them has vanished.

MOULIN ROUGE was an extremely expensive film to make and, unlike many of Huston's other films, made a handsome return at the box-office, in addition to sparking a revival of interest in the works of Toulouse-Lautrec among the general public. Indeed, following the film, his name became practically a household word.

The press, as usual, had a field day following Huston's colorful working methods. At one point, in spite of imminent rain, he held up the production for hours until he found a feather boa that was exactly right for one of his characters. Hundreds of technicians shivered in a specially blocked off section of Paris while the clock ticked away (the company had to vacate the street by six o'clock) and the costume department frantically searched every possible source for the needed item. It was finally found in a nearby strip-club and Huston coolly finished the shooting of the scene just under the wire.

The costumes for the film were by one of France's most famous theatrical designers, Marcel Vertes, who as a rule did the same job for the films of Jean Cocteau. Georges Auric (whom Huston was to use later for HEAVEN KNOWS, MR. ALLISON) one of France's most respected serious musicians, contributed the score, and he acidly remarked that his royalties from the famous song brought him more money than all his other classical works put together.

The acting, unfortunately, is simply awful. Jose Ferrer, a wooden actor at best, looks merely like Jose Ferrer with a beard walking on his knees. Zsa Zsa Gabor, talking in a thick Hungarian accent is miles from Jane Avril. But then, what can an actor do when faced with such a line as "Well, so long, Toulouse."

Long after one has forgotten the banality of the story and acting, the sheer beauties of the film remain; the opening dancing sequence at the Moulin Rouge and the touching farewell on the bridge played against a yellow sky. MOULIN ROUGE is definitely a film for the eye, not the mind.

David Stewart Hull

We wish to thank Mr. David Picker '53 for obtaining a print of this film for our series.