

LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD

- RIALTO PICTURES -

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director
Alain Resnais

Screenplay
Alain Robbe-Grillet

Producer
Pierre Courau Raymond Froment

Cinematography
Sacha Vierny

Costume Design
Coco Chanel Bernard Evein

Production Design
Jacques Saulnier

Editors
Henri Colpi Jasmine Chasney

Original Music
Francis Seyrig

English translation/subtitles (2007 Rialto re-release)
Lenny Borger

Original French release: June 25, 1961
U.S. release: March 7, 1962

France B/W Dyaliscope (2.35:1) In French with English subtitles

Running time: 93 min.

A RIALTO PICTURES RELEASE

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CAST

A / Woman
Delphine Seyrig

X / Stranger
Giorgio Albertazzi

M / Escort / Husband
Sacha Pitoëff

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AWARDS & NOMINATIONS

Golden Lion, Venice Film Festival 1961

Best Film of 1962, French Syndicate of Cinema Critics

Academy Award Nomination 1963, Best Original Screenplay

BAFTA Award Nomination 1963, Best Film

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PRODUCTION NOTES

In the winter of 1959-60 in Paris, the producers Pierre Courau and Raymond Froment approached the novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet with a proposal: would he like to meet film director Alain Resnais, with the idea of eventually writing a script for him? Their rationale is obvious; a teaming of the leading exponent and theorist of the latest movement of the French literary world, the *Nouveau Roman*, with an Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker -- whose first narrative feature, *Hiroshima mon amour*, had been a much-talked-about worldwide critical and commercial hit -- would be news in itself. (Robbe-Grillet in fact already knew Resnais' work and "admired the uncompromising rigor of its composition.")

At their first meeting, Resnais and Robbe-Grillet found they were already in total agreement on what they wanted to do, particularly on their lack of worry about specific causation and absolute time sequences, being both more interested in a kind of "mental time" that more exactly reconstructs our normal course of memory.

Three days later, Robbe-Grillet presented Resnais with four page-and-a-half outlines of script projects; Resnais offered to film any of the four, as well as two of Robbe-Grillet's novels. After a few more days, they decided to begin with *Last Year at Marienbad*.

Robbe-Grillet's resulting script, on which Resnais consulted regularly and which they discussed extensively after completion, was not simply dialogue but a shot-by-shot description of the film he saw in his head, complete with notations of framing, camera movements, and montage. It was so detailed that Resnais was able to complete his shooting script in two and a half days.

AN INFLUENCE?

While the script is an original, there are resemblances to *Morel's Invention*, a 1940 science fiction novel by Argentinian writer Adolfo Bioy Casares. (After the premiere, a friend called Robbe-Grillet to exclaim "But it's *Morel's Invention!*") In the book, a fugitive on a desert island is disconcerted to find it suddenly inhabited by anachronistically dressed people who, it turns out, come from a twenty-year old memory machine that produces 3-D images of previous events, eventually indistinguishable from the real world. Robbe-Grillet had read it and once pronounced it "astounding".

But, beyond the shooting script, Resnais made (if it still exists) one of the most tantalizing artifacts of film history: a complete chronology of the film on graph

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paper. Referring to it, he would apparently explain to the actors before shooting a scene how it would relate “in terms of its degree of reality” to a scene appearing later; he also somewhat coyly noted that the film could be re-edited to restore the chronological order of the scenes. More prosaically, something like that would be needed as a chart for studio use, to keep straight changes of costume, lighting, locations, etc. Resnais never claimed that this would be the key to the film, “if there is one.”

THE CAST

Although Resnais had worked with French film star Emmanuèle Riva on *Hiroshima mon amour*, this time he cast experienced stage performers who had no real prominence in film (*Marienbad* would be Delphine Seyrig’s first feature – her only previous screen role was in the legendary underground short *Pull My Daisy*). Curiously, all three principals would have foreign backgrounds: Giorgio Albertazzi was Italian, Sacha Pitoeff (Resnais had been a member of his stage company) was born of Russian parents in Geneva, and Seyrig spent her early years in the Middle East and some later years in New York (sharp-eared French fans could apparently detect a hint of accent in her speaking voice) —lending an additional otherworldly quality to the characters.

That otherworldly quality extended to the filming itself, Resnais commenting on the strange atmosphere of the production as the cast (slowly identifying with characters who had no past) and crew shivered through outdoor—and drafty indoor--shooting through the winter of 1960/61.

THE LOCATIONS

The incredibly lavish settings were an amalgam of locations, mostly at the Nymphenburg Palace in Munich, with additional scenes at the Schleissheim Palace just outside the city. Both are triumphs of the baroque style in architecture and art, dating originally from the 17th century, with additions through the 18th, and comprise groups of buildings within their compounds. (Thus Ludwig II of Bavaria, the “mad King Ludwig” of folklore and film, though renowned for his mania for fairytale architecture, had nothing to do with them, as he reigned in the mid-19th century.)

The Nymphenburg itself was at one time the summer home of the house of Wittelsbach, the royal family of Bavaria, and is enclosed in a 200-acre park. A number of scenes were shot in the Amalienburg, a hunting lodge in the rococo style constructed in the mid 1700s in the park, notably in its Spiegelsaal (Hall of

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Mirrors). The whole complex is open to the public and can be reached by tram number 17 from the city center.

THE COSTUMES

Although she remains uncredited in the film itself, the legendary couturier Coco Chanel personally designed Delphine Seyrig's costumes for the film. One of only nine films for which she designed throughout her nearly seventy-year career, this was her first in twenty-two years (since Renoir's *Rules of the Game*) and her next to last. Seyrig's feathery peignoir was probably an homage to Evelyn Brent in von Sternberg's silent gangster film *Underworld*.

THE HAIRDO

Marienbad was set in no particular year (although it had definitely taken place somewhere within the last decade), but Seyrig's character, her clothes, and, most particularly, her coiffure augured the future on both sides of the Atlantic. The clothes by Chanel, with strong intimations of the 1920's as well as strong hints for the '60's, were avant garde, as were the heroine's looks and her coiffure. Although this coiffure might have been dismissed as an un-updated flapper's hairdo, the flat bangs swept to one side and the close cap of glistening hair emphasizing the shape of her head were far fresher than any of the beehives teased up by the revered hairdressers in the U.S. or abroad. Above all, it was enchantingly young, fresh, and chic.

However, it was first seen on Seyrig, whose languid grace and nonchalance, as well as unusual bone structure, seemed to suit it and her part, but it was not for every woman any more than the Jackie Kennedy look had been. The *Marienbad* influence lingered, and that, combined with the cumulative boredom and irritation with teasing, caused coiffeurs to come out flatly for the flat, close-to-the-head look for fall. The beehives tumbled down; the teasing combs were broken across hairdressers' knees; and real, live hair, brushed and shaped and glossy, was back on many women's heads. (*adapted from article in retro-fashion-history.com*)

THE GAME

So what is that pick-up-sticks game at which Sacha Pitoeff seems invincible? Its name is Nim, and apparently dates back to ancient times, possibly originating in China. Earliest European references to the game date from early in the 16th century. Normally the player picking up the last object loses, but it can also be

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played the other way around. C. L. Bouton of Harvard developed a complete mathematical theory of the game in an article published in *Annals of Mathematics* in 1901; apparently if you know your math (in this case, the “binary digital sum of the row sizes”) the game is pretty foolproof. A simple tip: when there are only two rows left, always move to keep them equal. Resnais admitted that he never played the game himself.

THE SHOOTING

Not too surprisingly, in view of his passion for comic strips, Resnais personally storyboarded the film in advance—he called them ‘sketches’ and kept referring to them throughout while personally blocking all the numerous traveling shots himself. In the words of director of photography Sacha Vierney: “It is a classic image to see him advancing into the set, with a viewfinder in one hand and the text in the other. With one he frames the action, with the other he reads. As he walks he murmurs. And in this way he finds the rhythm he needs.”

Robbe-Grillet never set foot on the set, being in Brest and abroad in Turkey while shooting proceeded in Bavaria and in a Paris studio. The film was already at the rough cut stage when he first viewed any of the footage. His reaction? “I didn’t believe it could be so beautiful.” Since Resnais had followed so faithfully the scenario that they had discussed so fully, he “recognized it completely”, but he had not been prepared for Resnais’ “realization.” Among Resnais’ few additions was the scene of Delphine Seyrig’s different ways of sitting on the bed. (During the initial scripting sessions, he had also suggested an intrusion of the real world via conversations about politics, and that Seyrig should be pregnant; but eventually they both rejected these ideas.) All that remained to do after this screening were some final touches by editor Henri Colpi, and for Robbe-Grillet to pen some additional transitional passages in the narration.

After its premiere, *Last Year at Marienbad* speedily began collecting awards – Golden Lion at Venice, an Oscar nomination for Robbe-Grillet’s screenplay, etc. —and critical hosannas (along with some headscratching) around the world. Even the notoriously square Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times* rhapsodized: “Be prepared for an experience such as you’ve never had [before]... a truly extraordinary French film.”

Throughout the rest of the decade, *Marienbad*, in the words of critic James Monaco, represented “the very model of the modern avant-garde in narrative film.”

Inevitably the authors were pressed to disclose the “meaning” of the film. Among the possible solutions suggested have been the Orpheus-Eurydice myth; a

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visualization of the process of psychoanalysis (Albertazzi as doctor pushing patient Seyrig to go deeper); Albertazzi as Death; or the whole as a kind of stream of consciousness of a single mind, presumably the woman's, encompassing truth, lies, and visualized what-ifs, all taking place within a few seconds of "real time"... (As if to illustrate the general ambiguity, at one point in the film a prominent statuary group elicits three different, equally convincing, interpretations.)

To this day, the authors have studiously avoided endorsing any single interpretation.

THE NEW YORK TIMES ON MARIENBAD

Be prepared for an experience such as you've never had from watching a film when you sit down to look at Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad*, a truly extraordinary French film, which opened at the Carnegie Hall Cinema last night.

It may grip you with a strange enchantment, it may twist your wits into a snarl, it may leave your mind and senses toddling vaguely in the regions in between. But this we can reasonably promise: when you stagger away from it, you will feel you have delighted in (or suffered) a unique and intense experience.

And that, it appears, is precisely what M. Resnais means you to feel—the extreme and abnormal stimulation of a complete cinematic experience. For this is no usual movie drama that he is dishing up from a script of radical construction by Alain Robbe-Grillet. This is no lucid exposition of human behavior in terms of conventional dramatic situation, motivation and plot.

This is an eye-opening example of the use of the cinema device—the machinery of visual image-making, conjoined with musical sounds and the contrapuntal assistance of vocalized images and ideas—to excite the imagination as it might be excited by a lyrical poem or, better, by the tonal colorations and rhythms of a fine symphony.

To this observer's way of thinking (which we might as well recognize right now is going to be countered or challenged by others that may be just as good), it is not to be taken even as what it may seem to be—that is, a surrealistic picture of a romantic encounter between a man and a married woman, who meet at a European spa and drift into an affair that he cons her into believing began the previous year.

To our way of thinking and responding to the flow of sensuous stimuli, it is a web of complete imagination, a visualization of the thoughts, the mental associations,

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the wishes and fantasies that swirl through the mind of this fellow—the fellow conveying his dream to us—beneath the spell of an elegant palace that suggests all sorts of romantic things.

It suggests, as he walks us through it, looking at the decorated walls, the ballroom full of formal people, a stiff performance of Ibsen's "Rosmersholm," something of the cold, embalmed emotions that lived and died here in long-gone years. And as he picks up his married woman, his dream of love, and begins his pursuit, it suggests that time and emotions have no terminal points, that they whirl in fields of gravity surrounding material things and magnetize the sensitive people that come within these fields.

As a consequence of this concept, there is not time continuity in this film. The images change, jump, reverse, become fantastic, as the man continues his pursuit, pleading, reminiscing, always as in a desperate quest to escape the tension of loneliness, longing and desire. When he finally completes his persuasion and gets the woman to agree to go away with him, it is as though a stream of consciousness has ended its flow through a sea of memories.

The artfulness of this picture is in its brilliant photography, in black and white and (what is wondrous) on a radically wide screen; in its sumptuous setting and staging (most of it was shot in a palace and park near Munich); in its hypnotic rhythmical flow and in the radical use of actors almost as models within the architectural frame.

Delphine Seyrig as the woman, Giorgio Albertazzi as the man (who also performs as narrator through the better part of the film) and Sacha Pitoëff as the husband walk through their roles eloquently, speak occasionally in slumberous intonations and use their eyes tellingly. Dozens of other handsome people, stylishly and impeccably dressed, surround them with a dazzling aura of the haut monde and haute couture.

Francis Seyrig's music, mostly for the organ, has a sad, lyrical quality, and the French narration is poetic. It is too bad that it cannot be spoken in English by a beautiful voice, so to free the eye from the English subtitles, which keep one glued to the bottom of the screen.

To be sure, this is not a picture in which a vital "message" is conveyed. It is a romantic excursion—or perhaps a serious sort of travesty on same. It is, in short, an experience, full of beauty and mood.

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Take it thus and you should find it fascinating; try to make some sense of it—to discover some thread of proof or logic—and it is likely to drive you mad, like that clearly illogical match game that is played like a running gag through it.

- Bosley Crowther, *The New York Times* (March 8, 1962)

ROGER EBERT ON *MARIENBAD*

How clearly I recall standing in the rain outside the Co-Ed Theater near the campus of the University of Illinois, waiting to see *Last Year at Marienbad*. On those lonely sidewalks, in that endless night, how long did we wait there? And was it the first time we waited in that line, to enter the old theater with its columns, its aisles, its rows of seats—or did we see the same film here last year?

Yes, it's easy to smile at Alain Resnais' 1961 film, which inspired so much satire and yet made such a lasting impression. Incredible to think that students actually did stand in the rain to be baffled by it, and then to argue for hours about its meaning—even though the director claimed it had none.

Viewing the film again, I expected to have a cerebral experience, to see a film more fun to talk about than to watch. What I was not prepared for was the voluptuous quality of *Marienbad*, its command of tone and mood, its hypnotic way of drawing us into its puzzle, its austere visual beauty. Yes, it involves a story that remains a mystery, even to the characters themselves. But one would not want to know the answer to this mystery. Storybooks with happy endings are for children. Adults know that stories keep on unfolding, repeating, turning back on themselves, on and on until that end that no story can evade.

The film takes place in an elegant chateau, one with ornate ceilings, vast drawing rooms, enormous mirrors and paintings, endless corridors and grounds in which shrubbery has been tortured into geometric shapes and patterns. In this chateau are many guests—elegant, expensively dressed, impassive. We are concerned with three of them: "A" (Delphine Seyrig), a beautiful woman. "X" (Giorgio Albertazzi), with movie-idol good looks, who insists they met last year and arranged to meet again this year. And "M" (Sacha Pitoeff), who may be A's husband or lover, but certainly exercises authority over her. He has a striking appearance, with his sunken triangular face, high cheekbones, deep-set eyes and subtle vampirish overbite.

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The film is narrated by X. The others have a few lines of dialogue here and there. On the soundtrack is disturbing music by Francis Seyrig, mostly performed on an organ--Gothic, liturgical, like a requiem. X tells A they met last year. He reminds

her of the moments they shared. Their conversations. Their plans to meet in her bedroom while M was at the gaming tables. Her plea that he delay his demands for one year. Her promise to meet him again next summer.

A does not remember. She entreats X, unconvincingly, to leave her alone. He presses on with his memories. He speaks mostly in the second person: "You told me ... you said ... you begged me..." It is a narrative he is constructing for her, a story he is telling her about herself. It may be true. We cannot tell. Resnais said that as the co-writer of the story he did not believe it, but as the director, he did. The narrative presses on. The insistent, persuasive X recalls a shooting, a death. No--he corrects himself. It did not happen that way. It must have happened this way, instead ...

We see her in white, in black. Dead, alive. The film, photographed in black and white by Sacha Vierny, is in widescreen. The extreme width allows Resnais to create compositions in which X, A and M seem to occupy different planes, even different states of being. The camera travels sinuously; the characters usually move in a slow and formal way, so that any sudden movement is a shock (when A stumbles on a gravel walk and X steadies her, it is like a sudden breath of reality).

The men play a game. It has been proposed by M. It involves setting out several rows of matchsticks (or cards, or anything). Two players take turns removing matchsticks, as many as they want, but only from one row at a time. The player who is left with the last matchstick loses. M always wins. On the soundtrack, we hear theories: "The one who starts first wins ... the one who goes second wins ... you must take only one stick at a time ... you must know when to" The theories are not helpful, because M always wins anyway. The characters analyzing the stick game are like viewers analyzing the movie: You can say anything you want about it, and it makes no difference.

"I'll explain it all for you," promised Gunther Marx, a professor of German at the U. of I. We were sitting over coffee in the student union, late on that rainy night in Urbana. (He would die young; his son Frederick would be one of the makers of "Hoop Dreams.") "It is a working out of the anthropological archetypes of Claude Levi-Strauss. You have the lover, the loved one and the authority figure. The movie proposes that the lovers had an affair, that they didn't, that they met

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before, that they didn't, that the authority figure knew it, that he didn't, that he killed her, that he didn't. Any questions?"

I sipped my coffee and nodded thoughtfully. This was deep. I never subsequently read a single word by Levi-Strauss, but you see I have not forgotten the name. I have no idea if Marx was right. The idea, I think, is that life is like this movie: No matter how many theories you apply to it, life presses on indifferently toward its own inscrutable ends. The fun is in asking questions. Answers are a form of defeat.

It is possible, I realize, to grow impatient with *Last Year at Marienbad*. To find it affected and insufferable. It doesn't hurtle through its story like today's hits--it's not a narrative pinball machine. It is a deliberate, artificial artistic construction. I watched it with a pleasure so intense I was surprised. I knew to begin with there would be no solution. That the three characters would move forever through their dance of desire and denial, and that their clothing and the elegant architecture of the chateau was as real as the bedroom at the end of *2001* --in other words, simply a setting in which human behavior could be observed.

There is one other way to regard the movie. Consider the narration. X tells A this, and then he tells her that. M behaves as X says he does--discovering them together, not discovering them, firing a pistol, not firing it. A remembers nothing, but acts as if she cares. She thinks she hasn't met X before, and yet in some scenes they appear to be lovers.

Can it be that X is the artist--the author, the director? That when he speaks in the second person ("You asked me to come to your room ... ") he is speaking to his characters, creating their story? That first he has M fire a pistol, but that when he doesn't like that and changes his mind, M obediently reflects his desires? Isn't this how writers work? Creating characters out of thin air and then ordering them around? Of course even if X is the artist, he seems quite involved in the story. He desperately wants to believe he met A last year at Marienbad, and that she gave him hope--asked him to meet her again this year. That is why writers create characters: to be able to order them around, and to be loved by them. Of course, sometimes characters have wills of their own. And there is always the problem of M.

- collected in *The Great Movies* (2002, Broadway Books, a division of Random House)

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ALAIN RESNAIS (Director)

Alain Resnais' first two feature films were talked-about worldwide hits, and established his image as perhaps the most experimental and intellectual of the New Wave directors. But as one of France's most celebrated documentary filmmakers, he had already won an Oscar (for *Van Gogh*, 1948) and his work would go through several more permutations in critical shorthand and remain adventurous and experimental ("I never think of one film in relation to another; I only try not to stay in the same style"), in a career now spanning seven decades.

Born in 1922 in Vannes, Brittany, his early education was often interrupted by chronic asthma, allowing voluminous reading, from pulps to Proust, and beginning his lifelong passion for comic strips. Early movie influences were the silent serials of Louis Feuillade and the Astaire-Rogers musicals (old Hollywood movies remain an obsession).

Moving to Paris, Resnais joined the Pitoeff theater company (led by future *Marienbad* star Sacha Pitoeff) and studied at the IDHEC film school, but he found it too academic and technical. He began making shorts in 16mm; producer Pierre Braunberger saw one, *Van Gogh*, and financed a 35mm remake: it won both a prize at Venice and an Oscar for Best Documentary Short.

A series of acclaimed documentaries followed, many also on art. He won the prestigious Prix Jean Vigo for *Night and Fog* (1955), one of the first films to confront the horrors of the Holocaust. In it, color tracking shots through an empty, present-day Auschwitz were intercut with b&w newsreel footage.

Commissioned to make a documentary on the atomic bomb, he proposed an alternative: a fictional feature film to be written by novelist Marguerite Duras, a cinema neophyte. *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), in which Emmanuèle Riva's tortured memories of a tragic wartime romance with a German soldier are intercut with her present day affair with Japanese architect Eiji Okada, proved a worldwide, award-winning box office hit. Resnais' follow-up film, *Last Year at Marienbad*, was, if anything, even more talked about.

Muriel (1963) included nearly a thousand short scenes joined by shock cuts amid a fragmentized narrative; it won a Venice acting prize for Delphine Seyrig, but was a commercial flop. But *La Guerre est finie* (1966), starring Yves Montand as a Spanish Communist operative, relatively straightforward in narrative, was another award-winning popular success.

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However, *Je t'aime, je t'aime* (1968), on a time travel experiment gone wrong -- an experiment in pure impressionism -- proved a resounding flop. Six years of financing problems for Resnais entailed

He returned with *Stavisky* (1974), the saga of legendary 30s con man Serge Stavisky, starring Jean-Paul Belmondo and with music by Stephen Sondheim. Resnais' most straightforward work, it was his greatest box-office success. *Providence* (1977), his first English-language film, practically swept the then-new César awards, with seven wins, including Best Film, Director, Music and Screenplay. *Providence* starred John Gielgud, as a seemingly dying novelist drinking through a long night.

Mon oncle d'Amérique (1980), another commercial success and winner of the Critics' Prize at Cannes, interwove three personal stories with classic film clips, and with the theories and lectures of French behavioral scientist Henri Laborit. In retrospect a transitional work, *La vie est un roman* (1983) interwove three stories all taking place, in different periods, at a castle in the Ardennes. From here on, Resnais would be moving more toward concentration rather than complexity, the complex editing structures and time shifts giving way to long takes and linear storytelling, with music, always important, now often becoming an overt element.

L'Amour à mort (1984) brought back actors Pierre Arditi and Sabine Azema—both to become his regular stars—from *La vie est un roman*, along with Fanny Ardant and André Dussollier; these four would comprise practically the entire cast of a complex meditation on love and death, with near-blank views of the Other, in effect fifty musical interludes by modernist Hans Werner Henze. *Mélo* (1986) went even further away from Resnais' previous style: he resolutely refused to “open out” this very faithful adaptation of a 1929 triangle drama, remaining in studio settings throughout, but making it mesmerizingly cinematic via extremely long takes, sinuous camera movements, riveting closeups, and acting of suppressed intensity, with both Azema and Arditi winning Césars. His next, *I Want to Go Home* (1989), was a kind of *jeu d'esprit*, with Resnais indulging his passion for comic strips, with Adolph Green (Broadway/Hollywood titan of Comden & Green fame) as a visiting American cartoonist, complete with animation sequences, all from a script by Jules Feiffer.

The two-part *Smoking/No Smoking* (1993) continued in the vein of concentration, as well as being a memorable *tour de farce*: an Englishwoman decides whether or not to smoke a cigarette, and then ... the first part shows six variations of what might happen if she does; the second six more possible ramifications if she doesn't, with Arditi and Azema playing all nine parts on purposely artificial studio sets and within extremely extended takes in this adaptation of Alan Ayckbourn's eight-play cycle "Intimate Exchanges". In its own way, as complex a view of causality and

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probability as were his earlier works on time frames, it won five Césars, including Best Film, Director, Actor, Screenplay.

Although based on an original screenplay, and with an abnormally large (for Resnais) cast, *The Same Old Song* (*On connaît la chanson*) continued in this vein, with a contemporary relationship roundelay unfolding on artificial studio sets, but with an added stylization, the actors casually bursting into snippets of French popular songs. It won eight César awards, including Best Film, Screenplay and Actor (André Dussollier).

Resnais was 75 at the time of this 1997 triumph; a good time to hang up the viewfinder?

But six years later, he went even further. With *Not on the Mouth* (*Pas sur la bouche*, 2003), he adapted a 1925 don't-let-rich-hubbie-know-it's-bigamy operetta into a lighter than a soufflé divertissement packed with songs and dazzling period décor. And in 2006, at the age of 84, he returned to Alan Ayckbourn, adapting "Private Fears in Public Places" into *Coeurs*, six characters searching for love amid extremely limited, stylized settings.

Over the years, Resnais has become one of the most honored of French directors: of the nine films he's made since the inception of the César Awards, eight have been nominated for Best Director, seven for Best Film; he has won both awards twice. The French Syndicate of Film Critics has given him their prize for Best Film eight times, spanning his entire feature career, from *Hiroshima mon amour* to *Coeurs*.

Once married to Florence Malraux, daughter of novelist André Malraux (*Man's Fate* - and DeGaulle's controversial Minister of Culture), Resnais presently lives with his longtime star Sabine Azema.

ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET (Screenwriter)

Born in 1922 in Brest, Robbe-Grillet came from a family of scientists and engineers, not literati, and studied to be an agricultural engineer, eventually working in Africa and the Antilles, where he studied the diseases of banana trees.

In his first published novel, *Les Gommages* (*The Erasers*, 1953), a detective investigates a murder that apparently has yet to take place, its deeper pattern based on classical tragedy. His next novel, *Le Voyeur*, 1955, is perhaps his most acclaimed, the world seen through the eyes of a possible killer, although his interior thoughts are never described. Succeeding novels, *La Jalousie* (1957)

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and *Dans le labyrinthe* (1959), established him as one of the leading practitioners of the *Nouveau Roman* (a term coined by a French critic in 1957). Robbe-Grillet's essays, collected in *Pour un Nouveau Roman* (1963), expound an esthetic that, eschewing the niceties of plot, character, psychology, linear timelines, etc., concentrates on the minute and repetitive descriptions of objects.

Following on the worldwide success of his first screenplay, *Last Year at Marienbad*, he became a director himself with *L'Immortelle* (1963), and would complete a total of seven films through 1975. Teaching in the U.S. for over twenty years, he has remained active into his eighties: he directed a film in 2006 and published a novel in 2007.

He was elected to the French Academy in 2004, but has apparently not yet been installed officially.

DELPHINE SEYRIG

Born in 1932 in Beirut, the daughter of an archeologist, Seyrig began acting studies at 16, debuted on stage at 20, studied further at the Actors' Studio in New York, with her first film made there, Robert Frank's underground classic *Pull My Daisy*, which was written and narrated by Jack Kerouac. Back in France, her first film there, *Last Year at Marienbad*, made her known around the world. Her second, *Muriel*—also for Resnais—won her Best Actress at the Venice Film Festival. With a voice “like a veritable cello” (as described by actor Michel Lonsdale), and fluent in English and German as well as French, she acted for a checklist of notable international directors: Luis Buñuel (*Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* and *The Milky Way*); Jacques Démy (as the fairy godmother in *Donkey Skin*); Marguerite Duras (three films); Chantal Akerman (the title role in *Jeanne Dielman* and *Golden Eighties*); Mario Monicelli (*Caro Michele*); Joseph Losey (*Accident, A Doll's House*); Don Siegel (*The Black Windmill*); Fred Zinnemann (*Day of the Jackal*); and, in François Truffaut's *Stolen Kisses* fulfilling Antoine Doinel's ultimate fantasy, in a role inspired by Balzac's *La Lys dan la vallée* (which she starred in the next year for French TV). Seyrig also appeared in over 30 stage productions, directed films, and was the subject of an hour-long documentary, *Delphine Seyrig: Portrait of a Comet*.

A feminist activist in private life, she was one of the signers of the Manifesto of 343, in which female celebrities admitted to then-illegal abortions as part of the mid 70s movement that culminated in legalization in 1975.

She died in Paris in 1990 of lung cancer, age 58.

The Museum of Modern Art paid tribute to her with a retrospective in 2002.

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GIORGIO ALBERTAZZI

Born in 1925 in San Martino à Mensola, Italy. An idealistic fascist in his youth, he stuck with Mussolini to the end, then spent two years in prison, but was acquitted of collaboration in 1947. He debuted in the theater at the top, appearing in Luchino Visconti's production of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* in 1949. While his film roles have been mainly unimportant, for television Albertazzi wrote and starred in Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; and *George Sand* (he also directed the latter two); he continues to be one of the great actor/directors of the Italian stage. Since 2003, Albertazzi has been director of the Teatro di Roma and in 2004 received the [Vittorio] Gassman Prize Career Award.

SACHA PITOEFF

Born in 1920 in Geneva into a theatrical family. His parents, actor/director Georges and actress Ludmilla, both Georgian expatriates, ran their own celebrated theater troupe in Paris for decades (Georges had studied with Stanislavski in Russia, but disagreed with him). After his father's early death he formed his own theater, continuing with much of his father's repertory, especially Chekhov and Pirandello (Romy Schneider appeared in his production of *The Seagull*.) His many small parts in films, starting in 1952, included *The Prize*, with Paul Newman and Edward G. Robinson, Jacques Demy's *Donkey Skin*, and even an episode of *The Wonderful World of Disney*. On TV he also starred in Arthur Miller's *Incident at Vichy* and Pirandello's *Henry IV*. He died in 1990 in Paris.

SACHA VIERNY (Cinematographer)

Born in 1919 in Bois-le-Roi, Vierny was Alain Resnais cameraman over four decades, from *Night and Fog* to *Mon Oncle d'Amérique*, totaling eight features and two shorts, including *Hiroshima mon amour*, *Muriel*, *La Guerre est finie*, and *Stavisky*. Later he teamed with Peter Greenaway (who called him "my most important collaborator") for nine features, two television films, and a short, from *A Zed & Two Noughts* to *8 1/2 Women*, and including *The Cook the Thief His Wife & Her Lover*, *Drowning by Numbers*, and *The Belly of an Architect*. He also shot *Belle de Jour* for Buñuel and *Beau père* for Bertrand Blier, completing his last film at age 80. He died in Paris in 2001.

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JACQUES SAULNIER (Production Designer)

Born in 1928 in Paris, graduated from IDHEC. Production designer for every Resnais feature from for *Last Year at Marienbad* to *Coeurs* [2006], excepting only *Je t'aime, Je t'aime*. Other films include Schlöndorff's *Un Amour de Swann*, Frankenheimer's *French Connection II*, Granier-Deferre's *Le Chat*, Verneuil's *The Sicilian Clan*, Clouzot's *La Prisonnière*, Clive Donner's *What's New Pussycat*, Louis Malle's *The Lovers*, Lumet's *A View from the Bridge*, and three films for Chabrol, including *Les Cousins*. Nominated for ten Césars, he won for *Un Amour de Swann* and Resnais' *Smoking/No Smoking* and *Providence*.

FRANCIS SEYRIG (Music)

Brother of Delphine Seyrig, his distinctive pipe organ score for *Last Year at Marienbad* was his first for film. He later scored Bresson's *Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* and the television adaptation of Balzac's *Le Lys dans la vallée*, also starring his sister.

HENRI COLPI (co-editor)

Born in Brig, Switzerland in 1921. Editor of Clouzot's *Mystery of Picasso*, co-editor of Resnais' *Hiroshima, mon amour*, Colpi went on to direct *Une aussi longue absence* two years after *Last Year at Marienbad*, winning the Prix Louis Delluc, the Japanese Kinema Jumbo Best Foreign Film award, and sharing the *Palme d'Or* at Cannes with Buñuel's *Viridiana*. But although his next film, *Codeine*, won Best Screenplay at Cannes, he never made another film in France, continuing to edit the films of others and directing for TV. He died in 2006.

VOLKER SCHLONDORFF (Second assistant director, assistant camera)

Born 1939, Weisbaden, Germany. Also assistant director for Louis Malle and Jean-Pierre Melville (who called him "my spiritual son"). His over twenty feature films as director include *A Gathering of Old Men*, *Death of a Salesman* (with Dustin Hoffman for TV) and *The Tin Drum*, which won the Best Foreign Film Oscar and the Cannes *Palme d'Or*.

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ABOUT RIALTO PICTURES

Described as “the gold standard of reissue distributors” by Los Angeles Times/NPR film critic Kenneth Turan, Rialto Pictures was founded in 1997 by Bruce Goldstein. A year later, Adrienne Halpern joined him as partner. In 2002, Eric Di Bernardo became the company’s National Sales Director.

Rialto’s past releases have included Renoir’s *Grand Illusion*; Carol Reed’s *The Third Man* and *The Fallen Idol*; Fellini’s *Nights of Cabiria*; Jules Dassin’s *Rififi*; De Sica’s *Umberto D*; Godard’s *Contempt*, *Band of Outsiders*, *Masculine Feminine*, *A Woman is a Woman* and *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*; Julien Duvivier’s *Pépé le Moko*; Buñuel’s *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, *Diary of a Chambermaid*, *The Phantom of Liberty*, *The Milky Way* and *That Obscure Object of Desire*; Claude Berri’s *The Two of Us* (and his Oscar-winning short *Le Poulet*); Louis Malle’s *Elevator to the Gallows*; John Schlesinger’s *Billy Liar*; Clouzot’s *Quai des Orfèvres*; Mike Nichols’ *The Graduate*; The Maysles’ *Grey Gardens*; Mel Brooks’ *The Producers*; Claude Sautet’s *Classe Tous Risques*; Jacques Becker’s *Touchez pas au grisbi*; Bresson’s *Au Hasard Balthazar* and *Mouchette*; Franju’s *Eyes Without A Face*; and Jean-Pierre Melville’s *Bob le Flambeur* and *Le Cercle Rouge*, the latter released for the first time in its uncut European version.

In 2002, the company released the critically-acclaimed first-run film *Murderous Maids*, the chilling true story of two homicidal sisters, starring Sylvie Testud.

Rialto celebrated a record-breaking 2004 with the previously unreleased, original 1954 Japanese version of Ishiro Honda’s *Godzilla*; Peter Davis’s Oscar-winning and newly-restored 1974 documentary *Hearts and Minds*; and Gillo Pontecorvo’s groundbreaking *The Battle of Algiers*, which became one of the year’s top-grossing foreign films.

In 2006, Rialto released Melville’s 1969 epic masterpiece *Army of Shadows* for the very first time in the United States. *Army of Shadows* became the most critically acclaimed film of the year, topping many Ten Best lists, including those in *The New York Times* and *Premiere*, and was named Best Foreign Film of 2006 by the New York Film Critics’ Circle, in addition to receiving special awards from the Los Angeles Film Critics and National Film Critics associations.

Rialto’s re-release of Alberto Lattuada’s *Mafioso*, a dark comedy from 1962 starring Alberto Sordi, was the unqualified highlight of the 2006 New York Film Festival and released nationwide earlier this year. Other 2007 re-releases

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include Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Doulos*, starring Jean-Paul Belmondo, and Jean-Jacques Beineix's "second wave" thriller *Diva*.

In early 2008, the company will release the rediscovered "Brit Noir" masterwork *It Always Rains on Sunday* (1947), a slice of post-war British life directed by Robert Hamer (*Kind Hearts and Coronets*), and will strike new 35mm Scope prints of its very first release, Jean-Luc Godard's *Contempt*, starring Brigitte Bardot.

In 1999 Rialto received a special Heritage Award from the National Society of Film Critics, and in 2000 received a special award from the New York Film Critic's Circle, presented to Goldstein and Halpern by Jeanne Moreau. The two co-presidents have received the French Order of Chevalier of Arts and Letters.

2007 marks Rialto's tenth anniversary, a milestone that was celebrated with a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Similar tributes have been held in Washington, D.C. (AFI Silver Theater), Seattle (SIFF Cinema), and Rochester, New York (George Eastman House).

2007 RELEASES

**MAFIOSO
LE DOULOS
DIVA**

2006 Releases

**ARMY OF SHADOWS
THE FALLEN IDOL
FANFAN LA TULIPE
TWO OR THREE THINGS I KNOW ABOUT HER**

2005 Releases

**MASCULINE FEMININE
ELEVATOR TO THE GALLOWS
THE TWO OF US
CLASSE TOUS RISQUES
MOUCHETTE**

2004 Releases

**THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS
GODZILLA (U.S. premiere of uncut Japanese version)
HEARTS AND MINDS**

2003 Releases

**LE CERCLE ROUGE (U.S. premiere of uncut version)
A WOMAN IS A WOMAN
TOUCHEZ PAS AU GRISBI
AU HASARD BALTHAZAR
EYES WITHOUT A FACE
THE MILKY WAY**

2002 Releases

**PEPE LE MOKO
MURDEROUS MAIDS
QUAI DES ORFEVRES**

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UMBERTO D.
THE PRODUCERS
THE PHANTOM OF LIBERTY

2001 Releases

BAND OF OUTSIDERS
BOB LE FLAMBEUR
THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE
JULIET OF THE SPIRITS

2000 Releases

RIFIFI
THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE
DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID
BILLY LIAR

1999 Releases

THE THIRD MAN
GRAND ILLUSION
PEEPING TOM

1998 Releases

NIGHTS OF CABIRIA
GREY GARDENS

1997 Releases

CONTEMPT
THE GRADUATE

Pressbook written by Michael Jeck
Edited by Bruce Goldstein, with Tommaso Cammarano
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