



Nouvelle Vague Part One

May 2009 will mark 50 years since the debut of **François Truffaut**'s now seminal *The 400 Blows*, or *Les Quatre cents coups*, (to be released in selected cinemas nationwide, with new prints) at the Cannes Film Festival. This feature would effectively kick-start the movement of film-making known as the French *Nouvelle Vague*. In anticipation of this anniversary the **BFI Southbank** has joined forces with the **Ciné lumière** to present classic examples of this *new wave* and the films that were made because of it.

The film-makers of the French New Wave changed the face of more than just their native film culture, and the effects of this prolific scene are with us today, as similar movements were established as far off as Japan and Brazil. But it was not a unitary movement. It contained at least two distinct trends as well as many film-makers not attached to either. The most famous trend was that associated with the magazine *Cahiers du cinéma*, where critics including Truffaut, **Claude Chabrol**, **Jean-Luc Godard**, **Eric Rohmer** and **Jacques Rivette**, notorious for their assaults on the mainstream French cinema, began making their own freewheeling low-budget features, often American influenced.

Quite different from them was the 'Left-bank' group, composed of **Alain Resnais**, **Agnès Varda** and documentarist **Chris Marker**, leftwing in politics and more obviously experimental in their choice of forms. In between or to the side, many other film-makers profited from the generally optimistic atmosphere to make films of their own according to the new recipes – so many, in fact, that the market soon became saturated. By the time the wave ground to a halt, however, many great names had been established (some still active today) and world cinema had changed course – irrevocably, or so it seemed.

Our celebration of the *Nouvelle Vague* on its 50th anniversary is in four sections and spread over two months. In April we start by looking at some of the films which inspired or influenced the *new wave* to come, including the 'Cahiers gang', Chabrol, Truffaut and their friends, critics turned film-makers, who constituted the crest of the wave when it first appeared. We begin with *Bob le Flambeur* (1956) by **Jean-Pierre Melville** and **Louis Malle**'s thriller *Lift to the Scaffold* (*Ascenseur pour l'échafaud*, 1957) starring **Jeanne Moreau** and featuring a stunning improvised soundtrack by **Miles Davis**. We follow with Chabrol's *Le Beau Serge* (1958) and Godard's *Breathless* (*A bout de souffle*), with a screenplay by Truffaut, and *Le Petit Soldat* (both 1960).

In May we feature the rival tendency, the 'Left-bank' group, and also show other examples of the extraordinary variety of film-making which flourished in the heady years on the cusp of the 1960s.

The *Nouvelle Vague* season is presented in collaboration with **Ciné lumière**. For details of screenings there (13-22 March; 14-21 April), or information on the symposium '*The Nouvelle Vague: 50 Years On*' (13 & 14 March) please visit www.institut-francais.org.uk or telephone 020 7073 1350

ciné lumière 

Extended Run: *The 400 Blows* *Les Quatre cents coups* (NEW PRINT)

Thurs 9 April – Thu 23 April

Deeply moving yet devoid of over-sentimentality, the film centres on Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre Léaud), a 13-year-old constantly in trouble – justifiably or otherwise – with his parents and teachers. Drifting into truancy and petty theft, he soon finds himself at odds with still less sympathetic figures of adult authority...

Shot on the streets of Paris, the film exudes an authenticity – emotional, psychological, sociological – surely born of the semi-autobiographical story, and displays real compassion as it charts a seemingly inexorable progress towards delinquency. Great credit goes to Léaud, whose engaging but entirely uningratiating performance is a miracle of naturalism, but Truffaut was also wise in availing himself of many talents, on both sides of the camera, who would prove crucial to the development of the nouvelle vague.

France 1959 Dir François Truffaut. With Albert Rémy, Claire Maurier 99min EST PG A BFI release

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April Programme:

Nouvelle Vague: An Illustrated Introduction

The French New Wave broke on to the scene almost exactly 50 years ago, and irrevocably changed the course of cinema. But what exactly was it, and what in fact were its effects? Was it part of a larger shift already taking place in the cinema, or (to mix metaphors) was it just a tiny spark which happened to ignite a conflagration? We welcome the curator of our major retrospective, and author of the recently published *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s*, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, to shed new light on one of the greatest moments (or movements) of modern cinema.

Thu 9 April 18:10 NFT3 Tickets £5

Course: Revisiting the French New Wave

Each of six two-hour sessions will revisit a key aspect of the French New Wave, the film movement which revolutionised world cinema at the turn of the 1960s. Expert staff from KCL Film Studies will lead lively and accessible seminars, illustrated with extracts, introducing and discussing the films and a range of critical approaches. Issues will include New Wave style, major films, directors, stars, characters and narratives All welcome.

Thu 16 April - Thu 21 May 18:30 Studio Six sessions. Presented with King's College London.

Course fees £48, concs £30



The Future Film Institute presents: Boys Will Be Boys: From Bond to Belmondo

The Future Film Institute is an organisation of young people at the BFI dedicated to bringing film screenings and events to a young audience. Every month it selects films and designs workshops for 15 25-year-olds. What defines the leading man in cinema? This month the Future Film Institute examines three very different portrayals of the male protagonist – for just £5 (with proof of age) you can experience any screening foregrounding the suave charm and heroics of Sean Connery as James Bond in *Dr No*, Jean-Paul Belmondo's

Lift to the Scaffold Ascenseur pour l'échafaud

France 1957 Dir Louis Malle With Maurice Ronet, Jeanne Moreau, Lino Ventura 89min EST PG

A taut, free-wheeling thriller with an ingenious plot, sparkling location photography and a fantastic improvised score by the great Miles Davis, this film established Louis Malle as an exciting new voice in French cinema just as the *New Wave* was about to crash on to the scene. Critics have found the story contrived, but the film, if not an absolute must-view, is certainly an absolute must-listen.

Thu 9 April 14:30 NFT3, Fri 10 April 20:40 NFT2, Sat 11 April 16:15 NFT1

And God Created Woman Et Dieu... créa la femme

France 1957. Dir Roger Vadim With Brigitte Bardot, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Curt Jürgens 90min EST

At one level the story of a disturbed teenager, at another an opportunity for Brigitte Bardot to display to the world her radiant and unabashed sexuality, Vadim's film was both a huge popular success and a major influence on the New Wave to come. Its 'realism and life', in Truffaut's words, were a breath of fresh air injected into the complacent atmosphere of French 'quality' film-making.

Sat 11 April 18:30 NFT1, Sun 12 April 20:40 NFT2, Fri 17 April 20:50 NFT1

Zazie dans le métro

France 1960 Dir Louis Malle With Catherine Demongeot, Philippe Noiret 88min EST 12A

Adapted from a comic novel by Raymond Queneau and occasionally laboured in its attempts to find filmic equivalents for Queneau's extravagant and hilarious wordplay, *Zazie dans le métro* is a film that succeeds in spite of itself. It is funny in its own right and mordantly perceptive in the way its unflappable and knowing prepubescent heroine deflates all attempts to put one over her.

Mon 13 April 20:30 NFT3, Fri 17 April 18:30 NFT1, Tue 21 April 20:50 NFT1

The Diary of a Country Priest Journal d'un curé de campagne

France 1950 Dir Robert Bresson With Claude Laydu, Nicole Ladmiral 120min EST PG

A young priest in a country parish keeps himself going on a diet of bad wine and a vacillating sense of vocation. Bresson's *Diary of a Country Priest* is miles away from what most people think of as the spirit of the New Wave. And yet this austere beautiful film was singled out by Truffaut in 1954 as the perfect example of how to make a film d'auteur.

Mon 27 April 18:20 NFT1 Introduced by Philip Kemp, **Wed 29 April 20:30 NFT1**

Les Mauvaises rencontres

France 1955 Dir Alexandre Astruc With Anouk Aimée, Jean-Claude Pascal 84min EST

Alexandre Astruc was a critic best remembered today for his seminal article 'Le caméra stylo' (1949), arguing for a cinema which expresses ideas as fluidly as a writer does with a pen. Although not quite living up to its director's ambitions, *Les Mauvaises rencontres* is nevertheless an appealing and subtle film which shows in flashback a woman coming to terms with a series of mainly mistaken life-choices.

Tue 21 April 18:20 NFT2, Fri 24 April 20:40 NFT2

Bob le flambeur

France 1956 Dir Jean-Pierre Melville With Roger Duchesne, Isabelle Corey, Daniel Cauchy 95min EST PG

Resolutely independent throughout a long career stretching back to the late 1940s, Melville revitalised the French crime film in 1955 with this American-inspired heist movie in which an ageing gangster is tempted back into one last fatal throw of the dice. Shot largely on location by Henri Decaë, who later worked with Truffaut and Chabrol, *Bob le flambeur* was a forerunner of the New Wave to come.

Sat 11 April 20:40 NFT1, Mon 13 April 18:10 NFT3, Wed 15 April 18:30 NFT1

Le Rendez-vous de minuit

France 1961 Dir Roger Leenhardt With Michel Auclair, Lili Palmer 90min EST

Often described as the spiritual father of the New Wave, Roger Leenhardt was a critic and short-film maker who only ever made three feature-length films, but when he did they had something exceptional about them. *Le Rendez-vous de minuit* starts as if it might be a fantasy but soon resolves itself into a gripping psychological study with powerful and disturbing overtones.

Thu 23 April 20:40 NFT2, Sat 25 April 16:00 NFT2

La Pointe courte

France 1956 Dir Agnès Varda With Sylvia Monfort, Philippe Noiret 85min EST

A couple retreat to a village overlooking a lagoon in the south of France to work out the future of their relationship. Consisting entirely of a long conversation interspersed by scenes of life going on in the village, *La Pointe courte* is a boldly experimental film, prefiguring Varda's later concern with the relationship of people to landscape.

Thu 9 April 20:30 NFT3, Thu 16 April 18:20 NFT2

Le Beau Serge

France 1958 Dir Claude Chabrol With Gérard Blain, Jean-Claude Brial, Bernadette Lafont 97min EST 12A

The first completed feature of the gestating New Wave. François (Brial) returns to his native village to find his childhood friend Serge (Blain) alcoholic and depressed. Although far from a saint himself, François succeeds in heroically rescuing Serge from himself and restoring to him a sense that, through fatherhood, he can reacquire some sense of self-worth and love for others.

Fri 10 April 18:15 NFT2, Tue 14 April 20:40 NFT2

Les Cousins

France 1959 Dir Claude Chabrol With Gérard Blain, Jean-Claude Brial 103min EST 12A

The first New Wave film to get a commercial release in Britain, where it did excellent business – thanks mainly (one suspects) to its pervasively decadent atmosphere. Blain plays the country cousin staying in Paris with the sophisticated Brial while he prepares for his exams. He falls for a girl in his cousin's smart set, but things do not go well for him. A sparkling film, cruel but moral underneath.

Fri 24 April 18:20 NFT2, Thu 30 April 20:40 NFT2

Les Bonnes femmes

France-Italy 1960 Dir Claude Chabrol With Stéphane Audran, Bernadette Lafont 102min EST 12A

The most accomplished of Chabrol's early films. Four shop girls live entirely for the good times they hope to have when work stops in the evening. But the outer world is as mediocre as the world of work and the pursuit of love and excitement proves frustrating and, in the case of one of the girls, risky. Superb photography by Henri Decaë.

Tue 14 April 14:30 NFT3, Thu 16 April 20:50 NFT1, Sat 25 April 18:20 NFT

La Peau douce *Silken Skin*

France 1964 Dir François Truffaut With Françoise Dorléac, Jean Desailly 118min EST 12A

Made during Truffaut's own marital break-up, this story of a tragic love triangle is the most intense and well observed of his early films. Writer Pierre Lachenay conceives a passion for an air hostess (Dorléac) and blunders into an affair whose consequences he fails to predict. *La Peau douce* marks the point at which the New Wave directors are clearly seen to be going their separate ways.

Tue 21 April 14:00 NFT3 (Seniors' matinee with introduction & discussion), Sun 26 April 17:50 NFT1

Shoot the Pianist *Tirez sur le pianiste*

France 1960 Dir François Truffaut With Charles Aznavour, Marie Dubois 81min EST 12A

Adapted from an American thriller, *Down There* by David Goodis, Truffaut's film is both gentler and (at times) more comic than its hard-boiled original. Charlie (Aznavour) is a piano player in a bar but was once a concert pianist. Meanwhile another aspect of his past, in the form of his delinquent brothers, is about to catch up with him. Truffaut at his most inventive best.

Sat 25 April 20:45 NFT2, Wed 29 April 18:20 NFT2

Breathless *A bout de souffle*

France 1960 Dir Jean-Luc Godard With Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jean Seberg 90min EST PG

Godard's first feature and the film that (perhaps misleadingly) came to define the novelty of the New Wave. Petty crook and poseur Michel Poiccard kills a traffic cop and goes on the run. He takes refuge with American paperseller and aspirant journalist Patricia. Godard's elliptical story-telling and the hero's seeming amorality were equally puzzling – even shocking – to audiences at the time. Now it's a classic.

Mon 27 April 21:00 NFT1, Tue 28 April 18:30 NFT1, Thu 30 April 14:30 NFT2

Le Petit Soldat

France 1960 Dir Jean-Luc Godard With Michel Subor, Anna Karina, Laszlo Szabo 90min EST 15

Godard's second feature was banned by the French censors for its implications of government collusion with right-wing terror groups during the Algerian War. Bruno Forestier is instructed to assassinate a pro-Arab journalist but falls in love with an FLN agent (Karina) instead. Unconvincing as a political thriller, but full of delightful Godardian tropes – including Bruno's notorious utterance, 'cinema is truth, twenty-four times a second'.

Sun 19 April 20:40 NFT2, Wed 22 April 20:40 NFT2, Sun 26 April 16:10 NFT2

Une femme est une femme

France 1961 Dir Jean-Luc Godard With Anna Karina, Jean-Claude Brialy, Jean-Paul Belmondo 84min EST

According to Godard, his 'first real film', this is also one of his most witty and light-hearted. Angéla (Karina) wants a baby, Emile (Brialy) does not. Can the intervention of mutual friend Alfred (Belmondo) force the issue.? Around this trivial plot Godard weaves witty arabesques while asking challenging questions as to the very nature of cinema.

Wed 15 April 20:50 NFT1, Sat 18 April 18:40 NFT1, Sun 19 April 18:20 NFT2

Paris nous appartient

France 1961 Dir Jacques Rivette With Betty Schneider, Giani Esposito, Françoise Prévost 141min EST 12A

Rivette was *Cahiers du cinéma's* most brilliant critic and the New Wave's unluckiest film-maker. *Paris nous appartient* was three years in the making and was released into a market saturated with lesser films. With time, however, the puzzlement which initially greeted its convoluted plot and diffuse paranoid atmosphere has given way to a recognition that this is indeed one of the finest and most coherent New Wave films.

Sun 12 April 17:50 NFT2, Mon 13 April 15:30 NFT2, Wed 22 April 14:20 NFT2

Le Signe du Lion *The Sign of Leo*

France 1959 Dir Eric Rohmer With Jess Hahn, Michèle Girardon, Van Doude 102min EST PG

Rohmer's first feature is at first sight very unlike the delicate moral tales for which he later became famous, but its underlying concerns are much the same. A penniless American artist living in Paris experiences various changes of fortune, each of which brings about changes in his life and personality. It is when he is down and out that he comes nearest to discovering who he is.

Sun 26 April 20:40 NFT2, Thu 30 April 18:20 NFT2

May Programme:

Paris vu par...

France 1964

Dir Jean Douchet, Jean Rouch, Jean-Daniel Pollet, Eric Rohmer, Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol 98min

The New Wave in a nutshell. Six directors' contrasting takes on things that happen or might happen in different parts of Paris. Unsurprisingly, four of the six are about sex and love and Paris exteriors figure prominently (as often in New Wave films). Typically, however, Chabrol takes a look behind the net curtains of bourgeois life. The segments by Godard ('Montparnasse-Levallois') and Rouch ('Gare du Nord') are particularly recommended.

Wed 13 May 20:30 NFT3, Sun 24 May 18:30 NFT1

Le Joli Mai

France 1962 Dir Chris Marker 157min

Paris, May 1962. Peace in Algeria is imminent, but there are mutterings of an imminent right-wing coup. In this great documentary, Chris Marker seizes the moment to interrogate ordinary (and in some cases extraordinary) Parisians about their present lives and their hopes for the future. The result is a rich panorama of the social diversity of a city and its inhabitants in the course of an unfolding history.

Fri 15 May 18:30 NFT1, Sat 16 May 16:15 NFT1

Cléo de 5 à 7

France 1962 Dir Agnès Varda With Corinne Marchand 90min

Two crucial hours in the life of a singer who fears she has cancer. Cléo has her cards read, rehearses a song with Michel Legrand, sets out for the hospital, has a conversation with a young man on military service, and finally gets her diagnosis. Featuring a brief cameo by Jean-Luc Godard and Anna Karina, this is Agnès Varda's first proper feature and 90 minutes of pure magic.

Sun 3 May 18:30 NFT1, Mon 11 May 20:45 NFT1

Hiroshima mon amour

France 1959 Dir Alain Resnais With Emmanuelle Riva, Eiji Okada 91min PG

A sensation at Cannes in 1959 alongside *The 400 Blows*, Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour* interweaves two stories. A Frenchwoman making a film in Hiroshima finds her conversation and love-making with a young Japanese architect troublesomely interrupted by unwelcome memories of her teenage affair with a German soldier during the Occupation and her subsequent humiliation as a collaborator. The screenplay is by 'nouveau roman' author Marguerite Duras.

+ **Chris Marker's** classic science-fiction short *La Jetée* (France 1962, 28min, PG)

Sun 10 May 18:30 NFT1, Tue 12 May 20:45 NFT1

Muriel *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour*

France-Italy 1963 Dir Alain Resnais With Delphine Seyrig, Jean-Pierre Kérien 116min 12A

Another collaboration by Resnais with a practitioner of the 'nouveau roman', this time Jean Cayrol, and once again a story of traumatic memory. But it is not the young man tormented by memories of the Algerian War who holds centre stage, but rather his stepmother, Hélène (Seyrig), thrown into turmoil by a visit from a former lover and his new mistress. The most profoundly humane of Resnais' early films.

Mon 4 May 16:15 NFT1, Fri 8 May 20:45 NFT1

Lola

France-Italy 1961 Dir Jacques Demy With Anouk Aimée, Marc Michel, Corinne Marchand. 91min PG

Jacques Demy was not a member of the Cahiers du cinéma group, but he was a good friend of Truffaut and Godard and his first feature is quintessentially 'new wave' in style (aided by fabulous photography from Raoul Coutard). A nightclub dancer (Anouk Aimée) supports herself and her young son by entertaining American sailors in a jolly but down-at-heel bar. Meanwhile her former lover is searching for her ...

Fri 15 May 20:45 NFT1, Sat 16 May 18:30 NFT1

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*

France-Germany 1964 Dir Jacques Demy With Catherine Deneuve, Nino Castelnuovo 92min U

There are many echoes of *Lola* in this touching but unsentimental love story, sung throughout to an extraordinary score by Michel Legrand. Geneviève (Deneuve) is in love with Guy. Incautiously, she sleeps with him before he leaves for military service in Algeria, leaving her pregnant. Each finds a new partner but still longs for the other. A sublime bitter-sweet ending.

Mon 25 May 16:15 NFT1, Fri 29 May 20:45 NFT1

Un Homme et une femme

France 1966 Dir Claude Lelouch, With Anouk Aimeé, Jean-Louis Trintignant 102min PG

A bridge between the *Nouvelle Vague* and the glossier cinema of the 1970s and 1980s. Two thirty-somethings, both prematurely widowed, are attracted to each other but hesitate to commit. A delicate Rohmer-style tale of moral scruple and self-deception? Not a bit of it. Lelouch gives the story the full-blown romantic treatment – lush colours, expansive camerawork. A feast for the eye while you give your brain the day off.

Wed 20 May 20:45 NFT1, Fri 22 May 18:30 NFT1

Moderato Cantabile

France-Italy 1960 Dir Peter Brook With Jeanne Moreau, Jean-Paul Belmondo 90min. PG

The greatest theatre director of his generation, Peter Brook has also been an inspired if erratic film-maker. *Moderato Cantabile*, adapted by Marguerite Duras from her own novel, has touches of Antonioni about it, but it goes way beyond Antonioni in the

way it shows the interaction between two characters – a neurotic Moreau and a phlegmatic Belmondo, witnesses to a brutal murder – and the surrounding landscape.

Tue 5 May 18:30 NFT1, Sun 10 May 20:45 NFT1

La Tête contre les murs

France 1959 Dir Georges Franju With Jean-Pierre Mocky, Anouk Aimée, Charles Aznavour 98min

Co-founder with Henri Langlois of the Cinémathèque Française, Franju was best known in the 1950s for his aggressively left-wing documentaries. The same anti-establishment savagery animates this, his first feature, in which a father has his delinquent son committed to an asylum. Only his girlfriend (Aimée) and one of the doctors believe his incarceration is unjust, but there is little they can do to help him.

Sat 2 May 18:20 NFT2, Wed 6 May 20:40 NFT2

La Pyramide humaine

France 1961 Dir Jean Rouch 90min

Shot in the city of Abidjan in the Ivory Coast in 1959 with post-production supported by producer Pierre Braunberger for release in France in 1961, *La Pyramide humaine* is a psychodrama in which two groups of teenagers, black and white, who do not normally mix, act out the effect of being forced together by a charming but naive intruder. A fascinating forerunner of Rouch's later cinema vérité.

Wed 13 May 18:20 NFT2, Sat 16 May 20:40 NFT2

Chronique d'un été

France 1961 Dir Jean Rouch & Edgar Morin 90min

Ethnographic film-maker Jean Rouch and social theorist Edgar Morin (not to mention Quebec cameraman Michel Brault) join forces to create this 'experiment in cinema truth' in which a group of people is brought together to discuss life, love and happiness under gentle pressure from the film-makers. The original cinéma vérité and hugely influential on the Nouvelle Vague as well as on the whole course of television ever since.

Fri 1 May 20:40 NFT2, Sat 9 May 16:00 NFT2, Wed 13 May 20:40 NFT2

Black Orpheus *Orfeu Negro*

France-Italy-Brazil 1959 Dir Marcel Camus With Marpessa Dawn, Breno Mello 107min PG

Winner of the Golden Palm at Cannes and of an Oscar for Best Foreign Film, *Black Orpheus* is a reminder that the Nouvelle Vague at the beginning was a truly wide-ranging movement. At carnival time in Rio, Orpheus, a musician, meets and falls in love with Eurydice. As in the Greek myth, this is a story that cannot end well for the lovers. Truly spectacular.

Mon 25 May 18:20 NFT2, Thu 28 May 14:30 NFT2, Sun 31 May 20:40 NFT2

L'Eau à la bouche *The Game of Love*

France 1959. Dir Jacques Doniol-Valcroze. With Bernadette Lafont, Alexandra Stewart. 84min

A founder editor (with André Bazin) of *Cahiers du cinéma* in 1951, Doniol-Valcroze did not have the success as a film-maker of some of his fellow critics. *L'Eau à la bouche* is a comedy of manners with a fairly free and easy morality and much skimpier clothing than in the days when the genre was invented. Echoes of Jean Renoir and of Ingmar Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night*.

Thu 7 May 20:40 NFT2, Sat 9 May 18:20 NFT2

La Morte-saison des amours aka *Les liaisons amoureuses*

France 1961 Dir Pierre Kast With Pierre Vaneck, Françoise Arnoul, Daniel Gélin 100min

Like his friend and contemporary Eric Rohmer, Pierre Kast was fascinated by the moral ambiguities of what the alternative title of this film calls 'amorous liaisons', but he lacked either Rohmer's Catholic sensibility or his impeccable sense of *mise en scène*. Instead *La Morte-saison des amours* offers a defiantly secular and argumentative vision of a situation where A loves B, who loves C, who loves D ...

Sun 17 May 20:40 NFT2, Wed 20 May 18:20 NFT2

La Poupée

France 1962 Dir Jacques Baratier With Zbigniew Cybulski, Sonja Teal. 100min

Adapted from the novel by absurdist writer (and friend of *Cahiers du cinéma*) Jacques Audoubert, Baratier's film is a dystopian fiction in which an attempt to overthrow a dictatorship by inserting a new personality into the wife of one of the dictator's clique misfires with disastrous (but also comic) consequences. More in the mocking spirit of Buñuel than the pomposities of *Metropolis* or *Blade Runner*.

Thu 28 May 20:40 NFT2, Sat 30 May 18:20 NFT2

Adieu Philippine

France-Italy 1962 Dir Jacques Rozier With Jean-Claude Aimini, Yveline Cery, Stefania Sabatini 106min PG

Shot in 1960, Adieu Philippine had to wait two years to get a release and even longer for its immense charm and honesty to be recognised. The hero, Michel, plans one last fling before being sent to Algeria on military service. Only slowly does he realise that the girls he takes with him on holiday love him for who he is, not for what he pretends to be.

Wed 27 May 20:40 NFT2, Sun 31 May 18:20 NFT2

Une Histoire simple

France 1959 Dir Marcel Hanoun With Micheline Bezançon 68min

This simple story, cheaply made on 16mm with TV finance, is not as simple as it might appear. An unemployed woman leaves home to seek a living in Paris, small daughter in tow. The camera records the small events surrounding her search for subsistence but the heroine's commentary on the soundtrack is subtly out of phase with what is shown, giving a strange poetic effect

Sat 2 May 20:40 NFT2, Mon 4 May 18:20 NFT2

La Vie à l'envers Life Upside-Down

France 1963 Dir Alain Jessua With Charles Denner, Anna Gaylor 92min

Jacques has passed the threshold of being bored with an empty life working for an estate agent and decides to turn emptiness into a quasi-Buddhist pursuit of a personal nirvana. As he withdraws more and more from the world, it is the world itself that reveals its intrinsic – and very funny – meaninglessness. This may be a tragedy for others, but for Jacques it is liberation.

Tue 19 May 20:40 NFT2, Sat 23 May 18:20 NFT2

La Fille aux yeux d'or

France 1961 Dir Jean-Gabriel Albicocco With Marie Laforêt, Paul Guers, Françoise Prévost. 95min

When a pretty girl with golden eyes turns up at his modelling agency, its libidinous director, Henri Marsay, sees no problem in adding her to his list of conquests, but his co-director, Eléonore, is strangely put out, the reason being that she is already the girl's lover. There is more charm than depth in this baroque tale, whose subject matter made it a big box-office success.

Tue 26 May 20:30 NFT3, Sat 30 May 16:00 NFT2

Les Jeux de l'amour

France 1960 Dir Philippe de Broca With Geneviève Cluny, Jean-Pierre Cassel 84min

Suzanne wants a baby. Victor is unwilling to oblige. She turns to another man, but he is really too boring. This light-hearted film, very much in the spirit of early René Clair, and every bit as funny, was produced by Claude Chabrol and probably made him more money than his own films did. (Hawks's *His Girl Friday* also springs to mind). Jean-Pierre Cassel is especially comic.

Tue 19 May 18:20 NFT2, Sat 23 May 20:40 NFT2

L'Amérique insolite

France 1958 Dir François Reichenbach 86min

Nowhere in Europe were pro- and anti-American attitudes more sharply polarised than in France. Both are on display in this featurelength documentary (extended travelogue, according to some critics). Reichenbach has a fantastic eye for vivid and revealing detail, but his attitudinising sometimes lets him down. Chris Marker provided the original commentary, but unfortunately not much of it was used.

Thu 14 May 20:40 NFT2, Sun 17 May 16:00 NFT2

Extended Run: Pierrot le fou

France-Italy 1965 Dir Jean-Luc Godard.

With Jean-Paul Belmondo, Anna Karina, Dirk Sanders, Samuel Fuller 110min 15 A BFI release

Godard called it the story of the 'last romantic couple', but it was also his spectacular farewell to the style and spirit of the Nouvelle Vague. On impulse, Ferdinand abandons wife and child to take off with Marianne, an old flame, on a crazy and eventually tragic adventure, involving fast cars, gangsters and a Mediterranean idyll. This is a truly romantic film, but one which, in the best romantic tradition, is also deeply self-aware and at times self-mocking. A great finale to the world of the New Wave.

Release date: Fri 22 May

Booking information

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £8.60, concs £6.25 Members pay £1 less on any ticket. Website www.bfi.org.uk/southbank

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