

Pathé and Janus Films present

Marcel Carné and Jacques Prévert's

CHILDREN OF PARADISE

(Les enfants du paradis)

SPECTACULAR NEW 4K DIGITAL RESTORATION!

France – 1945

Running Time: 190 minutes plus Intermission

Sound: Mono

Aspect Ratio: 1.37

Formats: DCP, Digital

<http://www.janusfilms.com/paradise>

Contact:

Sarah Finklea

Janus Films

215 Park Ave. So.

Floor 5

New York, NY 10003

booking@janusfilms.com



JANUS FILMS

SYNOPSIS

Poetic realism reaches sublime heights with *Children of Paradise* (*Les enfants du paradis*), the ineffably witty tale of a woman loved by four different men. Deftly entwining theater, literature, music, and design, director Marcel Carné and screenwriter Jacques Prévert resurrect the tumultuous world of nineteenth-century Paris, teeming with hucksters and aristocrats, thieves and courtesans, pimps and seers. Janus Films is proud to present this masterpiece – repeatedly declared the greatest French film of all time – in a new, 4K digital restoration taken directly from the original camera negative.

CAST

PART I: THE BOULEVARD OF CRIME

Frédéric Lemaître	PIERRE BRASSEUR
Doorkeeper of the "Grand Théâtre"	LÉON LARIVE
Garance	ARLETTY
Lacenaire	MARCEL HERRAND
Avril	FABIEN LORIS
Jéricho	PIERRE RENOIR
Anselme Deburau	ÉTIENNE DECROUX
Baptiste Deburau	JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT
Stage Manager of the Funambules	PIERRE PALAU
Nathalie	MARIA CASARÈS
The Bearded Lady	JEANNE DUSSOL
Director of the Funambules	MARCEL PÉRÈS
Scarpia Barigni	ALBERT RÉMY
Madame Hermine	JEANNE MARKEN
The Blind Man	GASTON MODOT
Count de Montray	LOUIS SALOU
First Dandy	JACQUES CASTELOT
A Dandy	JEAN GOLD
The Cashier	GUY FAVIÈRES
Police Inspector	PAUL FRANKEUR

CAST

PART II: THE MAN IN WHITE

Frédéric Lemaître	PIERRE BRASSEUR
First Amateur Actress	LUCIENNE VIGIER
Second Amateur Actress	CYNETTE QUERO
Doorkeeper of the "Grand Théâtre"	GUSTAVE HAMILTON
Director of the "Grand Théâtre"	RAYMOND ROGNONI
First Author	AUGUSTE BOVERIO
Second Author	PAUL DEMANGE
Third Author	JEAN DIENER
Policeman	LOUIS FLORENCIE
Marie	MARCELLE MONTHIL
Célestin	ROBERT DHÉRY
Lacenaire	MARCEL HERRAND
Avril	FABIEN LORIS
Ticket Seller	LUCIEN WALTER
Garance	ARLETTY
Nathalie	MARIA CASARÈS
Baptiste Deburau	JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT
Anselme Deburau	ÉTIENNE DECROUX
Director of the Funambules	MARCEL PÉRÈS
Young Baptiste	JEAN-PIERRE DELMON
Jéricho	PIERRE RENOIR
Count de Montray	LOUIS SALOU
Madame Hermine	JEANNE MARKEN
Iago	JEAN LANIER
First Dandy	JACQUES CASTELOT
A Dandy	RAPHAËL PATORNI
Turkish Bath employee	HABIB BENGLIA

CREW

Director	MARCEL CARNÉ
Screenplay and dialogue	JACQUES PRÉVERT
Assistants Directors	PIERRE BLONDY BRUNO TIREUX
Cameramen	ROGER HUBERT MARC FOSSARD
Sound	ROBERT TEISSEIRE
Sound Mix	JACQUES CARRÈRE
Production design	ALEXANDRE TRAUNER LÉON BARSACQ RAYMOND GABUTTI
Costumes	ANTOINE MAYO
Music	JOSHEPH KOSMA MAURICE THIRIET
Pantomime	GEORGES MOUQUÉ
Editing	HENRI RUST MADELEINE BONIN
Make-up	PAULE DEAN
Photographer	ROGER FORSTER
General Management	LOUIS THÉRON
Production Manager	FRED ORAIN
Production Director	RAYMOND BORDERIE
Music directed by	CHARLES MÜNCH

With the cooperation of Société des Concerts du Conservatoire

EXTENDED SUMMARY

PART I: THE BOULEVARD OF CRIME

Frédéric Lemaître: A pleasant young man, rich only in ambition, who tries to get taken on by the Grand Théâtre and offers his heart to all passing females.

Baptiste Deburau: The sad clown, who seems to have fallen from the moon onto the trestles of the Funambules.

Monsieur Lacenaire: A writer and small-time crook.

Garance: She is beautiful and does as she pleases, altering the destinies of all those who come close to her.

Garance is at Lacenaire's place. She finds him entertaining. He is always talking (about himself). He protects her - were he capable of love, he would love Garance. He expects her to betray him one of these days.

But a traitor's face can be seen. Jéricho, seller of costumes, a disturbing messenger from the underworld.

Lacenaire the thief takes Garance for a stroll along the Boulevard of Crime, and they halt in front of the Funambules. Garance is out of work, but Lacenaire doesn't waste his time. He steals the gold watch of a passer-by and disappears. Garance appears to be the prime suspect and the law is about to descend on her. But Baptiste Deburau intervenes. He doesn't know how to speak with conviction, but his gestures are eloquent. He mimes everything that happened, to the crowd's delight. Garance's innocence is undeniable, and the grateful young woman throws a red flower to the artist. For the young man, this flower is destiny calling. Baptiste falls in love with Garance.

The Théâtre des Funambules presents pantomimes in naïve and charming settings where fairies, characters from the commedia dell'arte, men of the street, acrobats, and funny animals play their parts before enthusiastic audiences. They get their money's worth.

This undisciplined troupe, which the Director controls with shouts and fines, is divided into rival clans. And the unavoidable clash takes place on an evening when the audience is particularly agitated. A dreadful fight breaks out on stage and the curtain has to be brought down while the audience jeers and shouts. Two men save the situation. Frédéric Lemaître makes an unforeseen and triumphant debut, and Baptiste proves himself to be an ideal Pierrot. The Director's daughter, Nathalie, falls deeply in love with Baptiste.

Lemaître and Deburau become friendly, and Baptiste takes Frédéric to stay in his modest hotel, Le Grand Relais, where the agreeable Frédéric immediately makes a conquest of the very warm manager.

Baptiste Deburau walks alone through the dark Paris night. He makes friends with a supposedly "blind" beggar, who takes him to the Rouge-Gorge. This childlike name hides a den of thieves. Exactly the sort of place to bump into the costume-seller. He is indignant to find Baptiste in a place that is beneath him. Baptiste has no regrets, for suddenly Garance enters the sordid bar, accompanied by Monsieur Lacenaire. Lacenaire is followed by Avril, a pale hoodlum and admiring accomplice. Baptiste is irresistibly and openly drawn towards Garance, which in a place such as this is not without danger. Avril lets him know by throwing him out of the window, but Baptiste comes back through the door, knocks Avril down, and leaves with Garance.

Baptiste finds the courage to tell Garance of his love for her, and his great passion seems to touch this strange woman. She goes with Baptiste to the Grand Relais and prepares herself for a night of passion. But that doesn't work out. Baptiste, the bashful Romantic, flees from the object of his desire. Chance has it that Garance meets up with Frédéric Lemaître, who has no such reservations. Garance doesn't sleep alone on her first night at the Grand Relais.

At the end of the first chapter, Baptiste has become the star of the Funambules, where Garance's beauty is a sensation. This beauty has stolen the heart of Count Edouard de Montray, who has offered her an escape to a brand new life. But Garance is not for sale.

Frédéric Lemaître also acts in the pantomime, but against his will. He prefers other styles of expression. In the meantime, his love affair with Garance is failing. Frédéric is quietly jealous of Baptiste, of whom Garance thinks about too much for his liking. And Baptiste thinks about Garance too, while Nathalie suffers.

Lacenaire has decided to extend his business and is preparing a well-paid murder. Things go wrong, and once again it is the innocent Garance who is arrested by police in his place. But can one really arrest a beautiful woman who is friends with the Count de Montray?

PART II: THE MAN IN WHITE

Five years later, Deburau and Frédéric Lemaître have become idols. Lemaître plays all the great romantic roles with an unequalled fire and talent. Baptiste Deburau has reinvented pantomime.

Frédéric lives life like a burlesque, indulging in all the whims of his imagination. He is only serious on stage, where he will soon be interpreting Shakespeare. But in the meantime, the Management of the Grand Théâtre has asked its brilliant actor to appear in *L'Auberge des Adrets*, a boring melodrama.

Deburau, the moon catcher, has married sweet Nathalie. Every evening he triumphs on the stage. The common people and the elite alike salute him as the greatest mime artist of all time. Nathalie has born him a charming son, and the Funambules are prosperous.

Lacenaire, yet to find fame, is patient. He knows that his hour will come.

Frédéric's talent can't transform *L'Auberge des Adrets* into a decent play. However, the opening night is a triumph. By adding a touch of the madness that he applies to his private life, Frédéric Lemaître transforms the play into a farce. He even breaks the laws of theatre itself, acting out parts of the play amongst the audience! The dark melodrama turns into a successful comedy, and the chagrined authors challenge Lemaître to a duel. The second performance is postponed. The authors have been satisfied – Frédéric Lemaître was wounded in the arm.

With his newfound leisure time, Frédéric goes to the theatre to see Baptiste. On many evenings, a beautiful and elegant stranger takes her place in the same box. It is Garance, who has been persuaded by Count de Montray to let him try to make her happy. Frédéric and Garance recognize each other; the famous actor doesn't take long to realize what draws her to the Funambules.

Frédéric hurries backstage, where he is welcomed like the prodigal son. He is quick to inform Baptiste of Garance's regular attendance at his show. Baptiste has not forgotten Garance. He burns with the memory, and an unstoppable urge drags him off stage in the middle of a performance. Baptiste rushes to Garance's box. Too late, again. The box is empty.

In the meantime, the seller of costumes has seized on the occasion to make trouble for Baptiste. He has informed Nathalie that Garance is in the theatre. Her little boy, carefully coached, goes to see Garance. She leaves and returns to her luxurious mansion, where another shadow from her past is waiting. Monsieur Lacenaire, chancing his luck, has come to see her. Leaving, he bumps into the Count de Montray, and their two worlds collide. The Count, tormented by jealousy, suspects that his rival is Lemaître.

Everybody who is anybody in Paris crowds to the opening of *Othello*, in which Frédéric Lemaître surpasses himself. Garance has just received flowers from Frédéric, with the assurance that all his jealousy has been concentrated onstage. The Count, however, refuses to believe it. After the triumphant performance, he challenges Frédéric.

Baptiste, having found Garance again, holds her in his arms behind the curtain, drunk with joy. The following morning, the Count de Montray waits at the Turkish Baths for Frédéric Lemaître's seconds. Two men will arrive, but only one will leave. Avril leaves the body of Montray, whom a satisfied Lacenaire has just murdered, sure that he has fully achieved his destiny. Fame awaits him too.

Baptiste also believes he has achieved his destiny. Tonight, at their old hotel, he holds Garance firmly in his arms. As dawn breaks, Baptiste will no longer let go of his newfound happiness.

Nathalie, who is also fighting for his love, intervenes. Garance no longer feels she has the possibility of finding happiness with the man she loves. She leaves by the Boulevard du Crime which, flooded with mask wearing crowds, seems to swirl in a shared madness.

In vain, Baptiste chases desperately after Garance. Too many things are against him. These immovable obstacles materialize in a frightful throng, a crushing mass against which the defeated man struggles in vain, falling further and further away from his lost love.

THE END

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF *CHILDREN OF PARADISE*

After JENNY (1936), DRÔLE DE DRAME (1937), LE QUAI DES BRUNES (1938), LE JOUR SE LÈVE (1939) and LES VISITEURS DU SOIR (1942), Marcel Carné and Jacques Prévert tried to develop a film that was to star Arletty, Pierre Brasseur and Louis Salou: LA LANTERNE MAGIQUE (or JOUR DE SORTIE or LES PRÉSENTS DU PASSÉ). The project failed. As they searched for a new subject, they met with their friend Jean-Louis Barrault in Nice, on the Promenade des Anglais. The actor - who had come to see Madeleine Renaud acting in LUMIÈRE D'ÉTÉ by Jean Grémillon, with adaptation and dialogues by Jacques Prévert and Pierre Laroche - spoke to them about the mime artist Jean-Baptiste Deburau. He then went on to mention two of his contemporaries: Frédérick Lemaître and Pierre-François Lacenaire. Carné was intrigued with the idea of bringing the Boulevard du Temple of the years 1830-1840 to the screen. It was known at the time as "The Boulevard du Crime," since it grouped together many popular theatres that specialized in melodramas. Prévert was more interested in the anarchist Lacenaire, the murderous poet.

Carné and Prévert got down to work. The director carried out the research, notably in the Carnavalet Museum in Paris, and took the results of his findings to Prévert, who had stayed in the southern zone. It was the beginning of 1943. It took six months to write the script at the Prieuré, a house rented by Prévert near Tournettes-sur-Loup. Friends who fled from occupied Paris joined him there and worked on CHILDREN OF PARADISE, which was initially entitled FUNAMBULES. The painter Antoine Mayo designed the costumes. Art director Alexandre Trauner and composer Joseph Kosma - both Jewish - worked in secret, thanks to the brave complicity of Prévert, Carné, and their crew.

Shooting started in Nice on 18th August 1943 at the Victorine Studios. The project took shape thanks to producer André Paulvé, co-proprietor of the studios, whose name is not listed in the credits because Pathé took the project over in October. Shooting conditions were very chaotic because of the problems caused by the Second

World War. Filming came to a halt after three weeks of shooting. Violent storms damaged the sets which, according to contemporary reports, had taken 67,500 hours of construction work. 1,800 extras were sometimes on set at once. Film stock was rationed. Under the Vichy Government, it was forbidden to make feature films longer than 2750 meters without special permission (CHILDREN OF PARADISE ran for 5,000). The Germans forbade filming at night. But the team stood firm, and filming wrapped in April 1944. After several months of editing, Pathé received the original negative in January.

Carné tried to delay the release of the film until after the Liberation. The two parts of CHILDREN OF PARADISE - "The Boulevard of Crime" and "The Man in White" - were screened on Friday, 9th March 1945 at 7pm at the Palais de Chaillot, at a gala screening for social works in favor of the cinema and prisoners of war, and was then released on March 15 in the Parisian theatres of the Madeleine and the Colisée.

Contrary to received opinion, the critics were not uniformly favorable. On March 17th in *Les Lettres françaises* George Sadoul used the word "masterpiece" and on March 28th in *Le Canard Enchaîné* Henri Jeanson recommended that people go "immediately to see this film." But François Chalais wrote on March 17th in *Carrefour* that CHILDREN OF PARADISE was a "failure," judging the film as an unsuccessful succession of "brilliant but hesitant ideas." It was in the spring of 1946, in the first edition of *Intermède*, that Jean Mitry repeated the word "failure," for which he does not blame Carné or Prévert but "the lack of harmony and cohesion in their shared work." As for the public, audiences were completely won over.

On 31st December 1946, Jacques Prévert was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Author of an Original Screenplay. In the end he was not the winner of the famous statuette. Years passed by, and the film gained an increasingly large audience throughout the world. In 1995, to celebrate cinema's centenary, a jury of journalists and historians put together a list of the 1000 greatest feature films made between 1944 and 1994. With 688 votes out of 822, CHILDREN OF PARADISE was elected the Best Film.

Carole Aurouet

INTERVIEW WITH MARCEL CARNÉ

*Extracts from an interview by François Forestier
Studio Magazine January 1991*

Jean-Louis Barrault was the origin of CHILDREN OF PARADISE. Jacques Prévert and I were on the Riviera, at Saint-Paul-de-Vence, in 1942 or 1943. We went down to Nice, where we met Barrault. We talked a lot about the theatre, and went for a drink, and he told us a story about the mime actor Debureau, which enchanted us. Debureau, at the height of his fame was walking along the Boulevard du Crime arm in arm with his mistress. A drunkard called out to the lady, Debureau pushed him away with his walking stick, and with drunken stubbornness the guy came back calling the woman all sorts of dreadful names. Debureau, in a rage, gave the man a second hit with his cane, so violently that the man dropped down dead. And all Paris rushed to the trial to hear Debureau speak!

I thought it was a marvelous story, Prévert also. Paulvé, my producer, had said to me: "I'm going to earn a lot of money with LES VISITEURS DU SOIR (THE DEVIL'S ENVOYS). Marcel, I want you to make a very big film for me. Like a fresco." First Prévert and I thought of MILORD L'ARSOUILLE (LORD ROGUE). But at that time we had very little means, it was wartime, and it seemed at that time indecent to film MILORD L'ARSOUILLE (LORD ROGUE). Of course that role would have gone to Pierre Brasseur. We gave up the idea. And there at the Colombe d'Or, we talked about Debureau again. I decided to go to the Carnavalet Museum, to the print collection, to do some research. There, I had 200 photos taken of engravings. In the rue Dauphine I found a book by Jules Janin in which I discovered that the upper gallery is known as "paradise." And I returned to the Colombe d'Or, where Prévert had taken possession of a huge table on which details of each scene were filed in separate folders. Every time he had an idea he made a note. Seeing me he said: "I've been working while you were away." And we got down to work. Very quickly we realized that the film would be long. And it was Paulvé who suggested cutting it into two parts. I accepted, on condition that for the first exclusive release in Paris it would be screened together as a whole. He agreed. Then, when the Americans invaded Sicily, filming in Nice had to stop. We received an order from Vichy, to go

back to Paris. But the producer was not allowed to come with us. And Pathé took the film over. Pathé wanted to cut the film in two, programming one episode at the Colisée, and one episode at the Madeleine. I managed to get what I initially wanted - the film was show in its entirety. Seats, which usually cost 40 francs, were sold for 80. The film ran for 45 weeks. And ticket sales for theaters in the other areas of Paris subsequently doubled. It is still being shown around the world. I continue to receive a very modest percentage... two and a half percent. They don't want to give me more, even though they earned billions with this film.

MARCEL CARNÉ FILMOGRAPHY

- 1976 LA BIBLE / THE BIBLE
- 1974 LA MERVEILLEUSE VISITE / THE MARVELOUS VISIT
- 1971 LES ASSASSINS DE L'ORDRE / LAW BREAKERS
- 1968 LES JEUNES LOUPS / YOUNG WOLVES
- 1965 TROIS CHAMBRES À MANHATTAN / THREE ROOMS IN
MANHATTAN
- 1963 DU MOURON POUR LES PETITS OISEAUX / CHICKEN
FEED FOR LITTLE BIRDS
- 1960 TERRAIN VAGUE / WASTELAND
- 1958 LES TRICHEURS / THE CHEATERS
- 1956 LE PAYS D'OÙ JE VIENS / THE COUNTRY I COME FROM
- 1954 L'AIR DE PARIS / AIR OF PARIS
- 1953 THÉRÈSE RAQUIN / THE ADULTRESS
- 1951 JULIETTE OU LA CLEF DES SONGES / JULIETTE, OR KEY
OF DREAMS
- 1950 LA MARIE DU PORT
- 1946 LES PORTES DE LA NUIT / GATES OF THE NIGHT
- 1945 LES ENFANTS DU PARADIS / CHILDREN OF PARADISE
- 1942 LES VISITEURS DU SOIR / THE DEVIL'S ENVOYS
- 1939 LE JOUR SE LÈVE / DAYBREAK
- 1938 HOTEL DU NORD
LE QUAI DES BRUMES / PORT OF SHADOWS
- 1937 DRÔLE DE DRAME / BIZARRE, BIZARRE
- 1936 JENNY
- 1929 NOGENT ELDORADO DU DIMANCHE / NOGENT

ABOUT THE RESTORATION

Interview

This is the first time that Marcel Carné's masterpiece has been given such a complete restoration from the original negative. The work lasted many months and included the use of state of the art technology, especially the use of 4K scanning, the first time this has been done in Europe. Christian Lurin, manufacturing manager at Éclair Laboratories, and Léon Rousseau, specialist of sound restoration at LE Diapason, were project managers of the undertaking, one for the images, and the other for the sound.

Where was the original negative of CHILDREN OF PARADISE, which served as the starting point for this restoration?

CHRISTIAN LURIN – First of all, we must remember that CHILDREN OF PARADISE was made during the War on nitrate film stock, like all films of the time. And we all know that nitrate is a fragile compound that decomposes over the years. In France during the early 1980s, on an initiative taken by Jack Lang, all nitrate negatives were stored under optimal conditions at the Bois-d'Arcy archive. The original negative was stored there with the others.

Does nitrate render the restoration work special?

LURIN – Nitrate in itself does not have any specific worries. The big problem we encountered was that the original negative had not always been handled with the greatest of care. It was very damaged in certain places, particularly by the presence of mold, which causes blurred images that are very difficult to treat. Even by making frame-by-frame manual corrections, it is still complicated. And every single reel of film had traces of mold.

Before starting the restoration work, this negative had to be digitized?

LURIN – To start with, the negative had to be sent to a specialized laboratory in Bologna to be scanned in very high definition. Here at

Éclair, we had no physical contact with the negative, only with digitized files. However, we did have to “complete” this digitized version of the original negative with the help of what we call a “master positive,” a print struck from the original negative. In total we used three such “master positives” from which we recuperated certain frames, either because they were missing from the original negative, they had already been replaced by copies of inferior quality, or because they were too damaged to be restored. So for us the restoration started with a reconstruction game in order to have the best possible elements at our disposal. In the end, I would say that the original negative – that is to say the film that really went through the camera – represents about 90% of the frames we had to restore.

Did you proceed in the same way for the sound?

LÉON ROUSSEAU – The major characteristic of the sound of CHILDREN OF PARADISE is variable density, a process used in France until the early 1950s before being replaced by fixed density. Variable density is a much inferior process with a poorer signal to noise ratio. Indeed, background noise is almost always the main problem encountered in restoration, and CHILDREN OF PARADISE did not escape that rule. I received two digitized elements from Bologna. The first was made from the original negative and the second was from a “master positive.” Therefore, I had the soundtrack of the whole film in two different formats. Theoretically, the positive print should have been used as my basic model, but the audible background noise was unstable. It fluctuated all the time, which was extremely uncomfortable to listen to. So I used the master positive, which had a little more background noise, but at least it was stable.

Up until now, the negatives of a film to be restored were digitized in 2K [in Europe]. CHILDREN OF PARADISE is the first to have benefited from digitization in 4K. How can the difference be measured?

LURIN – It can be seen in the resolution, because the image is better defined. In 2K, there are 2048 pixels per line; in 4K there are 4096. Before choosing 4K, Pathé undertook comparative tests with 2K, and the quality of the image on screen was clearly superior in 4K. Partly because of definition, but mostly in the fineness and tonality in

contrast levels. Pathé's decision to work with 4K is courageous and should be congratulated, because it means a heavier and more expensive job. Just to give you an idea, importing or exporting a 4K file that corresponds to a reel of film lasting 20 minutes takes the machine 32 hours of calculation!

Do you meet with the same problem for the sound?

ROUSSEAU – No, because digital sound reached its maturity during the 1990s. For this reason sound is easier to work with than images.

CHILDREN OF PARADISE consists of how many 35mm reels?

LURIN – Eleven reels, each 600 meters in length. It's a very long film in two parts, each lasting about one and a half hours. Part one is a little longer, with a total of six reels.

When did you receive the first digitized reels?

LURIN – We received the first reel from Bologna at the end of the summer of 2010. But since the digitization had been rather complex – taking into account that each reel has to undergo a preparation process that consisted of mending damaged sprocket holes or splicing any tears – we only received the final files at the end of the winter. That enabled us to undertake a number of tests before starting out the real restoration work.

How did you go about it?

LURIN – As I told you, the problem with 4K is the size of the files. We therefore tried to divide the film into the parts most in need of restoration so as to lighten the weight. Nevertheless, the first stage consists of running each reel through a machine in semi-automatic mode. This first pass enables us to undertake what are known as the basic corrections. We get rid of the classic instability that can be found in a negative print. We correct any variations in luminosity, either because the film has aged, or because the lighting effects used at the time were not always quite stable. At this stage we also undertake a few tasks of pure restoration, but this is restricted to correcting simple faults like dust or small abrasions. Once this first

pass has been done, we then run the damaged parts (tears, scratches, mold, even a customs' stamp placed directly on the negative print in one case!) through other machines, each with its own operator. When the damage is complicated, an operator can spend hours, even days, of work on only 8 or 10 frames. So we separate the data, and this requires an enormous amount of follow-through. Not only must the images be moved from one machine to another, which requires hours of transfer, but we also need to know, at every instant, precisely where they are and at what stage of restoration. Finally all these frames must be reintegrated in order to reconstitute the reel, and we then screen it for verification purposes.

What was the duration of this restoration?

LURIN – A little over four months, from December to April. During the last two months, we were a team of some twenty people working on the project. It is a very big restoration job indeed. I leave it to you to calculate the weight of one reel: 45 Mb per frame, times 24 frames times 60 seconds, times 20 minutes...

ROUSSEAU – That's where we can appreciate that sound is a lighter element to treat. I invested in one hard disc of 500Gb, it cost me 80 euros, and I worked on my own.

Does sound suffer the same type of deterioration as images?

ROUSSEAU – Yes, it's the same thing. There are scratches, mold, etc. Optical sound is a photographic image, so it suffers in the same way as the image.

LURIN – Except for the fact that the sound is placed on the left margin of the film, and is slightly adjusted in relation to the frame. Indeed, when you watch a film being projected, you can see that the right hand side of the picture, which goes right to the edge of the film, is more damaged than the left side because the soundtrack is on the left side and hence takes the knocks.

ROUSSEAU – Image and sound suffer the same types of deterioration, but the way of approaching the problems is totally different. When there is a "small piece of damage" in a frame, the

same zone in the preceding frame is duplicated to replace it. Sound is continuous and needs to be treated differently.

What are the various stages in sound restoration?

ROUSSEAU – As with the images, we put the whole film through an automatic machine that we call a Cedar. There is a program to detect minor flaws in the sound. It takes them out and replaces them with what should be there. But the Cedar can't be used for lengthy spots of deterioration. In the case of CHILDREN OF PARADISE, after the first stage, there remained on average two or three fixes per second, which had to be done by hand. That means we undertook micro-editing of very short lengths, because the ear cannot hear the difference between two sounds if they are separated by less than 15 milliseconds. In other words, everything that needs reconstruction in the sound must be done piece by piece, each piece lasting less than 15 milliseconds. To put it more simply, we could say that sound restoration consists of dividing big problems into a series of small problems...

At which moment are sound and image reunited in the course of the restoration?

ROUSSEAU –At the end, as is always the case with cinema...

LURIN – ...and it is obviously an essential stage. Things are not perceived in the same way when both images and sound are present at the same time. Flaws that are in the images can “disappear” by magic, thanks to the voice of an actor that captures all the attention. Inversely, very mediocre sound can seem impeccable when the accompanying images are very strong. It is only at this stage that we can really judge the quality of the work that has been accomplished. That is why for the past two months we went every Thursday morning to the big screening theatre of the Gaumont Marignan cinema on the Champs-Élysées so as to see any eventual flaws under real conditions.

ROUSSEAU – One of the hard things in restoration is to maintain a spectator's eye, a kind of innocence, and freshness.

Exactly how do you judge a restored film?

LURIN – With regard to the image, we try to get to a point where the viewer will not be disturbed by the remaining defects while remaining true to how the film looked on first release. To restore does not mean to modernize. At the level of texture, for example, we retained a certain grain, because that was how images looked at that time. Care must be taken not to misrepresent the film.

ROUSSEAU – In a way it's like not rewriting history. We saw that the major problem with sound on CHILDREN OF PARADISE was background noise. We can reduce this sound grain and we did, but the question is to know just how far to go. Someone with no experience with old movies could say: "Ah, we can still hear the background noise." And he would be right. But even so, should we have gone further? I think not, because then we would have changed the inherent style of the film. When the sound grain is lowered beyond a certain level, the voices of the actors are also modified and become metallic. We would have attacked the actor's way of playing the role. We would have lost subtlety and emotion. The film dates from 1945; it is what it is, the actors were allowed to breathe.

Which scenes presented you with the biggest problems?

LURIN – There were at least two. The first is at the beginning of reel 2 of the second part, when Lacenaire (Marcel Herrand) is waiting in the dressing room for Frédéric Lemaître (Pierre Brasseur). At this spot the original negative was very damaged, particularly because of mold. We therefore chose to use a nitrate "master positive" which was in a better state. But after having restored the scene, which represented 2 or 3 minutes of film, we realized that it was not possible to make it match the rest of the reel. So we decided to go backwards, despite everything, and use the original negative. It was a huge task, but at least we found the same texture, grain and definition.

The other difficult scene is a shot of young Baptiste when he goes to see Garance (Arletty) in the theatre. It was full of vertical abrasions across the whole width of the image. In all his years of experience,

the technician who restored this shot had never seen such damage. Here again it took days of work.

ROUSSEAU – On the sound level, the most delicate scene was undoubtedly that at the start of the film in which Lacenaire (Marcel Herrand) is in the shop of the writer. Not only was there an awful lot of background noise, but the original soundtrack was really not very good. It had directional microphones and actors who kept moving away from them. On top of that, there were mediocre loops added in the post synchronization process. In short, a very difficult passage indeed, which was as much the fault of the stock used as the original sound mix. So a lot of work had to be done to reduce these defects while at the same time not going too far.

Did the work of restoration follow the chronology of the film?

ROUSSEAU – Not really. Usually we isolate each type of problem and deal with them one after the other across the whole film.

LURIN – Defects are graded from 1 to 3. We start on the defects at level 3, the highest, and then gradually work down to level 1. And we stop when we decide that there are no more disturbances for the viewer who will watch the film in normal screening conditions.

Did you ever have to reconstitute entire images?

LURIN – Yes, that did happen. In some shots, images were missing from the original negative, probably because they were cut by mistake in the editing. In this case, these missing frames were recreated out of nothing. Sometimes only one or two frames were missing, sometimes five or six. And in some sections, it was really visible. But reconstituting frames is obviously complicated, because we are no longer talking about restoration, but recreation. It is very complex, closer to animation or special effects.

ROUSSEAU – As sound is continuous we don't think in terms of frames. If a sound is missing, we generally manage to borrow an equivalent sound from somewhere else in the film. When it concerns background ambiance there is no problem. When it's part of the music, we can also manage to find the same note somewhere else.

On the other hand, when a word is missing from dialogue, there's nothing we can do. It is possible to reconstruct a frame, but not an actor's voice. If all that is missing is a syllable, we can manage to pick the sound up from a different shot. We did it once on this film. In one scene, Lacenaire (Marcel Herrand) said the word "quelque" and the second syllable had been accidentally cut during the original sound mix. So I went to search for this missing "-que" in order to stick it back on...

CHILDREN OF PARADISE is classic film elected a few years ago as being the greatest French film of all time. Were you aware of a special responsibility when it came to restoring such a masterpiece?

LURIN – Yes of course, but above all we started appreciating it more and more. Having to work on it over a number of months, almost frame by frame, one develops a sort of affectionate sentiment for the film. It seems like we know all its secrets. Now it's as if it belongs to us too. I think that all the people who worked on this restoration will never forget the experience.

ROUSSEAU – I think that all films should be treated equally. If we start thinking about our responsibility we'll become paralyzed. After all, people who make great films don't know they will become great while they are shooting them. That can only be appreciated afterwards. You have to put yourself in that mindset. You just have to do the best possible job.

LURIN – It's true that the work was not done any differently on this particular film. But having lived with it for over four months we obviously see it with a different eye.

What did you discover in the film that you had not noticed previously?

LURIN – Personally, I never tire of watching the pantomime scenes of Jean-Louis Barrault. And I love the dialogue too.

ROUSSEAU – It is exceptionally good. That is the strongest part of the film.

LURIN – Prévert gave it incredible resonance. Just one example: there is a scene in which Garance, played by Arletty, is arrested by a police sergeant. At the end of the scene he says to her: “You’re free.” Like a shot she replies: “Fine, because I adore freedom.” It was 1943, half of France was under German occupation, and she says that almost at the start of the film!

ROUSSEAU – And the sets are absolutely sublime. Knowing that they were created during the war, the Paris we see in the film is amazing.

LURIN – Visually the film is infinitely rich. The shots of the crowds on the Boulevard du Temple can be watched ten times, and each time you can discover new elements: “Oh, I hadn’t noticed those two dancers doing the French cancan before.” It’s a film that fills both the eyes and the ears.

If you had to chose a single image or a single sound?

LURIN – Without thinking about it, I would choose Garance’s face in the second part of the film when she is at the theatre wearing a little veil, and she shines like a star. It’s the scene in which Frédérick Lemaître meets her again after a number of years.

ROUSSEAU – I like the film’s music very much, but as we are talking about this particular scene, I would choose the wonderful exchange of their meeting again. Him: “Garance, you haven’t changed.” Her, in that inimitable voice: “More distinguished?”

Interview by Christophe D’Yvoire

PATHÉ extends very warm thanks to:

The Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé Foundation.

The estate of Marcel Carné, and in particular Mrs Tania Lesaffre.

The estate of Jacques Prévert, and in particular Mrs Eugénie Bachelot-Prévert.

Imagine Ritrovata Laboratory (Bologna) for their precious knowledge and advice.

Éclair Laboratories for their daily support and total commitment.

LE Diapason for enabling us to hear a clear and natural soundtrack.

Isabelle Julien, who did her utmost to restore all the original poetry to the image.

Xavier Loutreuil, for his enlightened and fruitful assistance during every stage of the restoration.

Arnaud Surel, Loïc Vanneste, and their team for their kind welcome and the quality of their projection.

Les Archives Françaises du Film for storing the original elements under the best possible conditions.

The Cinémathèque Française for the loan of a print.