

**BALLOON ROUGE, LE (The Red Balloon)**

FRANCE 1956 34 mins.

Directed by Albert Lamorisse

***Principal Cast:***

Pascal Lamorisse, Sabine Lamorisse, René Marion, Paul Perey, Michel Pezin

Listed as the "Best Film of the Decade" at the American Film Festival, winner of the grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival and an Academy Award Winner for Best Original Screenplay, "**The Red Balloon**" by Albert Lamorisse is the story of Pascal, a lonely French boy who befriends a wondrous balloon which follows him everywhere--to school and to church--and even hovers outside his window when in his room. The film is both a beguiling fantasy and a touching allegory on the magic powers of love and friendship.

**BONHEUR D'OCCASION (THE TIN FLUTE)**

CANADA 1997 121 minutes,

**RI Premiere**

Directed by Claude Fournier

***Principal Cast:***

Mireille Deyglun, Pierre Chagnon, Marilyn Lightstone, & Martin Neufeld

World Wide Distribution by Cité-Amérique International

Original French Language Version

During World War II in Montreal's poorest district, an idealistic woman tries to come to terms with some of life's toughest challenges to find her place in the world.

Florentine Lacasse, a waitress at a Five & Dime luncheonette, longs for a better life, but her meager salary is entirely devoted to supporting her large, struggling family. When she falls for handsome Jean Lévesque, she thinks she finally has a chance to escape her condition, but he is ambitious and embarrassed by Florentine's humble background. To avoid a romantic commitment, he pushes her into the arms of a friend, Emmanuel Létourneau, forcing her into a love triangle that will change her life forever.

In the tradition of the great classic period drama, "The Tin Flute" is a deeply moving story about simple people overcoming incredible hardships to come into their own.

The Tin Flute is based on Gabrielle Roy's unforgettable "Bonheur D'Occasion," one of the world's most highly acclaimed novels of the 20th century, that has been translated into 14 languages and winner of the Prix Femina (France) and the Governor General's Award (Canada).

**IRMA VEP**

FRANCE 1998 96 minutes

**RI Premiere**

Director: Olivier Assayas

Producer: Georges Benayoun

Screenplay: Olivier Assayas

Photography: Eric Gautier

***Principal Cast:***

Maggie Cheung, Jean-Pierre Leaud, Nathalie Richard, Antoine Basler.

IRMA VEP is a film of paradox, chaos, and joy. Made by a French director and featuring a mostly French cast, the film's dialogue is mainly in English. The movie stars a woman who can't speak a lick of French. It also manages to be one of the most inventive modern films I've ever seen, and it somehow manages at the same time to be sleek, exciting, chaotic, and a lot of fun.

Maggie Cheung, playing herself, walks into the frantic production office of director Rene Vidal. Vidal is so devoted to his film that everyone thinks he's impossibly demanding and

insane. He has cast Maggie to star in his new film, a remake of Feuillade's old silent flick LES VAMPIRES. This film, too, is to be silent, and good thing-- Maggie doesn't speak French.

What follows is a funny and mysterious atmospheric experiment into the power of image and art, and what elevates such things above the mundane. It is both dazzling and elliptical. In the course of a whirlwind night, Maggie is left behind at the late-night showing of that day's dailies, is given a ride by Zoe the costume designer, taken to a strange party where she doesn't know anyone, rushes off to Rene Vidal's house to witness him in the midst of a nervous breakdown, and then she caps off the evening by donning her character's latex bodysuit and stealing around her hotel and learning to be the thief and spy that the character of IRMA VEP is. I like films which raise interesting questions and are wise enough to know that questions which can't be answered are best left out there, for each person to interpret his or her own way. And what better questions for a movie to ask than ones having to do with cinema itself. The fusing of a streamlined, intriguing narrative with the more experimental film-within-the film is more than good; Olivier Assayas stands on the brink of creating an exciting new cinematic language, a new way of telling stories by creating atmospherics through images both clear and obtuse.

**PLOUFFE, LES (The Plouffe Family)**

CANADA 1981 168 mins.

Directed by Gilles Carie

***Principal Cast:***

Gabriel Arcand, Rémi Laurent, Pierre Curzi, Juliette Huot, Émile Genest, Gérard Poirier

Original French language Version

"The Plouffe Family" is the story of an epoch, that of World War II as seen through the eyes of a working class family in Québec City. It is the story of how that troubled period affected a whole people--the people of Québec.

The Plouffes are a large family, warm and traditional--on most subjects. It comprises father Théophile, a former cycling champion who's become a humble typographer; Napoleon, a plumber who is clever at his job, but more interested in sports than in women; Ovide, a factory workers whose passion is the opera; Guillaume, sporty and sought after by the young ladies in the parish; Cecile, still single, although she continues to enjoy the courtship of her former fiancé, Onesime, a married trolley-driver; and last, but not least, Josephine Plouffe, who watches over her brood with an untiring eye.

Through these colorful characters "The Plouffe Family" paints a giant fresco of Québec society in the process of transformation. Religion and politics mix, creating conflicts in the population and forcing choices that changes their lives forever.

**TISSERANDS DU POUVOIR, LES**

CANADA 1988 240 mins.

Directed by Claude Fournier

***Principal Cast:***

Denis Bouchard, Pierre Chagnon, Michel Forget, Rémy Girard, Gratien Gélinas, Juliette Huot, Paul Hébert

Original French language Version

Set in Woonsocket, RI, this epic charts the rise of fall of families working in a mill town at the turn of the last century. Powerful, poignant and disturbing, the film was nominated for multiple Canadian Genie Awards.

**UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG, THE**

FRANCE 1964/1996 91 mins.

Director by Jacques Demy

Producer: Mag Bodard

**RI Premiere (restored version)**

In French with English Subtitles,

Jacques Demy's masterpiece of music and romance, starring Catherine Deneuve in the role that made her an international star, has been fully restored in breathtaking color. Considered one of the most beautiful films ever made, *Umbrellas* catapulted the 20-year-old Deneuve to international stardom and features an unforgettable score by Michel Legrand. But, despite its legendary status as one of the great French classics, the film has long been unseen in this country. By the mid-1970s, all prints were badly faded and the negative damaged beyond repair. This re-release, with new prints arduously restored from a recently discovered tri-color negative, restores *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* to its former glory. *Umbrellas* is a bittersweet romance about the permanence (or otherwise) of true love. The film is truly one of a kind—every word is sung. The result is something actually quite magical and as fresh today as when it first appeared 33 years ago.