

TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED IN 35MM BY THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16,
7 P.M. • HUMANITIES
QUADRANGLE
ALICE CINEMA

PRESERVING THE MUSIC OF THE STREETS: TWO BY NICK DOOB

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM
PAUL L. JOSKOW '70 M.PHIL., '72 PH.D.



In the fall of 2015, Nick Doob, a 1969 graduate of Yale College, donated original film materials to the Yale Film Archive. Films Doob donated dated back to the summer of 1967, when he began making films through a course at the Free School of Union Square in New York, under the direction of Allan Siegel, one of the founders of the Newsreel collective. Doob's first film, *PLASTIC SAINTS*, about the March on the Pentagon, attracted the attention of the documentary filmmaker D.A. Pennebaker, who saw the film at a small film festival and asked Doob to come work with him at his production company in New York. Doob accepted the invitation, and so began a long creative association that has continued for decades.



Also included in the donation were original elements for Doob's next two films, *COSTUMED DANCER* and *42ND ST MOVIE*, films Doob made in 1969 as part of Yale's Scholars of the House Program, a senior honors program that required students to create, in lieu of regular classes, "a finished essay or project which must justify by its scope and quality the freedom which has been granted." All three of these films were preserved in 2017 by the Yale Film Archive through a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation.

STREET MUSIC (1979, 16mm, 57 min.) *Preserved by the Yale Film Archive, 2018*

STREET MUSIC presents performances by 19 street musicians in seven cities across the United States, and was one of Doob's first feature-length films. With the support of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Doob and his friend Peter Bull, who recorded sound for the film, took a train to New Orleans, where they purchased a car for \$500. They began filming their first subject, New Orleans legend Oliver "Porkchop" Anderson, a tap dancer working in a city where street performing was prohibited. After New Orleans, as Doob put it in a 2020 interview, "We just sort of stumbled around the country," staying at the homes of friends and family, and learning from locals about who they should try to film. As Doob says, the film is presented "in the order I shot it. I don't make anything of that, but it's the way it worked, and I can't imagine cutting it in any different way."

The film features singers, guitarists, drummers, dancers, and others, including street performance legends like Brother Blue, the Automatic Human Jukebox, and Jimmy Davis. Drummer Gene Palma, who masterfully captures the styles of legendary bandleaders Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa, had gained some fame from an appearance in Martin Scorsese's *TAXI DRIVER* three years prior. From San Francisco to New York, and Chicago to San Antonio, the film captures a cross-section of Americans filled with raw talent, showmanship, and hustle, and presents a time capsule of the fashion, architecture, and culture of the 1970s.

LONDON SONGS (1973, 16mm, 28 min.) *Preserved by the Yale Film Archive, 2021*

Nick Doob and David Sewall, a violinist and singer and the subject of *LONDON SONGS*, grew up together, neighbors and childhood best friends. While at Yale together in 1969, Sewall provided the violin score for one of Doob's earliest films, *COSTUMED DANCER*. Sewall, who was a regular performer at Hungry Charlie's and later Toad's Place in New Haven, spent a year busking in Europe, and Doob captured some of his time in London in this film. A sort of precursor to the later *STREET MUSIC*, this film documents Sewall as he performs traditional and original songs on the streets and in the pubs, parks, and markets of London. In color and in black and white, the film captures Sewall's unique style and good humor as he transfixes audiences of curious school children, West End theater-goers, and passersby on the sidewalk. His energetic performance of then-current hit "Young Girl" for a group of Covent Garden flower sellers is a particular highlight, and the film closes with a moving rendition of "Danny Boy" that prompts pub-goers to join Sewall in song.

NEXT UP: ONLY IN NEW HAVEN, FOLKS! JOIN US FOR THE WORLD PREMIERE OF THE ONLY 35MM FILM PRINT IN EXISTENCE OF THE TIME-LOOP ROM-COM **PALM SPRINGS** (2020), STARRING ANDY SAMBERG AND CRISTIN MILIOTI, WITH DIRECTOR MAX BARBAKOW IN PERSON, **THURSDAY, MARCH 2 AT 7 P.M.**