



TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

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

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 7, 2016
7:00PM • WHITNEY
HUMANITIES CENTER

To Be a Man

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



TO BE A MAN, director Murray Lerner's hour-long "educational film about education," began as a commissioned piece for Yale University, but was soon recognized by National Educational Television as having a wider potential audience, and, in November of 1966, was broadcast on more than 60 local stations across the country. Though commissioned and funded by Yale, the film avoids being an advertisement for the University, thanks to Lerner's particular take on the intellectual and social lives of the students. As WGBH producer Henry Morgenthau put it in a letter to the University, "...I am left full of admiration for your artistic and institutional courage. It is the best TV film essay I have ever seen..."

As TO BE A MAN was ready to screen on campus and air across the country, Strobe Talbott '68 (later a journalist and Deputy Secretary of State) reviewed the film in the *Yale Daily News*, and described its approach: "Early in the film, the camera takes the audience on a kaleidoscopic walking tour of the campus, playing on Yale's architectural diversity. This emphasis quickly makes the obvious shift to Yale's diversity of skills, interests, and individuals. The film puts these ingredients together in a way which accentuates a serious tone and an intellectual flavor. It is a picture of a community questioning itself. This emphasis leaves little room for stereotypes. There are no shots of Handsome Dan, the football team, or senior societies." The *YDN* wasn't the only publication to make note of the fact that a film about Yale featured no shots of its vaunted football team: Fred Hechinger of the *New York Times* noted that "...much credit must go to Yale University. It permitted a documentary to be made that is not a publicity blurb nor an effort to tease money out of alumni. To shoot a college picture without a glimpse of gridiron requires audacity."



Student reaction to the film at the time was mixed: one student quoted in the *YDN* review stated that "[h]ad I seen the movie as a high school student, I would have been petrified by the free-wheeling, almost anarchistic intensity which seemed to be everywhere." Another complained that "[t]he movie gave the false impression that all Yale students are as intellectual as the ones portrayed on film. It needed a few shots of a mixer with gross-outs and beer cans to be complete." As Lerner himself said after a screening of the film in the Branford College dining hall on November 16, 1966, the film was intended to focus on one aspect of university education. "I assume that the film will appeal to bright young intellectuals or students of a particular creative bent... The film is an over-all essay on Yale, but the fundamental questions it raises are applicable to any modern university."

Some of the figures who feature prominently in the film were already well known at the time, including President Kingman Brewster, Professor of Architecture Vincent Scully, Yale and Olympic track and field coach Robert Giegengack, and Yale Chaplain William Sloane Coffin, Jr. Others would come to prominence later, including the classics professor Erich Segal, five years before his *Love Story* would become the top selling work of fiction and the biggest box office hit of 1970, as well as a young John Kerry, member of the class of 1966.

An October 1947 article in the Harvard *Crimson* noted that Murray Lerner '48 had assisted in writing a scenario for a film to be produced by "Veritas Films, the all-student project for the production of College cinema." This film, the first production of this new, all-undergraduate group, was called A TOUCH OF THE TIMES (1949), written and directed by Michael Roemer (Harvard '49), who has since 1966 been a professor of film and American studies here at Yale. From this auspicious beginning, Murray Lerner has gone on to a career making films that have ranged from short industrials to science films, from groundbreaking 3-D productions to music documentaries, including the legendary FESTIVAL! (1967), featuring Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and others at the Newport Folk Festival, and FROM MAO TO MOZART (1980), about the violinist Isaac Stern in China. Both films were nominated for an Academy Award; FROM MAO TO MOZART was awarded an Oscar.

DIRECTED BY **MURRAY LERNER**
(1966) 57 MINS.

PRODUCED BY **MPO PRODUCTIONS, INC.**
DISTRIBUTED BY **NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION**

MUSIC BY **PAUL BUTTERFIELD BLUES BAND**

DID YOU KNOW: EARLY IN THE FILM, A STUDENT IS PICTURED READING THE SEPTEMBER 14, 1965 EDITION OF THE *YALE DAILY NEWS*. ALONG WITH AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE UNCERTAIN STATE OF THE BULLDOGS FOOTBALL SQUAD, THE PAPER FEATURED PIECES ABOUT THE RECOVERY OF A MILLION-DOLLAR COIN COLLECTION STOLEN FROM STERLING LIBRARY, THE TRIAL OF A 22-YEAR-OLD DRAFT OBJECTOR, THE IMMINENT COMPLETION OF KLINE BIOLOGY TOWER, AND THE NEWS THAT THE SCHOOL OF FORESTRY WOULD ACCEPT WOMEN FOR THE FIRST TIME.

NEXT UP: JOIN FRANK AND CAROLINE MOURIS **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4 AT 7:00 P.M.** FOR AN EVENING OF ANIMATED SHORT FILMS, INCLUDING THE PREMIERE OF FOUR NEWLY-PRESERVED FILMS MADE BY MOURIS WHILE HE WAS A STUDENT AT YALE, AS WELL AS HIS OSCAR-WINNING **FRANK FILM** AND MORE!