



# TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

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

SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 8, 2015

2:00PM • WHITNEY

HUMANITIES CENTER

# THE TRAIN

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



All of the trains, crashes, and wrecks are real: the filmmakers did not take advantage of the technological illusions (miniatures, rear screen projection, matte shots) available in 1964. And Burt Lancaster, age 51, did all of his stunts, whether jumping on and off moving trains or climbing rooftops and steep hills. *THE TRAIN* is so authentic, so believable in every detail—and so exciting—that one can forgive its major *departures* from actuality.

**THE ACTUALITY:** The Nazis had destroyed thousands of paintings (deemed “degenerate art”) seized from public and private collections in Germany and occupied countries, but allowed many to survive so that they could be sold to support the war effort. As the Allies approached Paris in August 1944, the Nazis loaded 148 crates of paintings onto a train bound for Germany. Rose Valland, the curator who had risked her life to ensure the paintings’ survival during the Occupation, engaged the Resistance in stopping the train. Cooperative bureaucrats manipulated red tape, and the train never got beyond a few miles from Paris. The film completely transforms this event into an expansive adventure, with railway inspector Labiche (Lancaster) performing a rescue operation that looks forward to the elaborate deceptions of *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE* and to many action-suspense movies (e.g. *RAMBO*, *DIE HARD*, *AIR FORCE ONE*) about battles between lone (or few) individuals and overwhelming forces.



**THE DIRECTOR(S):** Arthur Penn, who had received acclaim in 1962 for his second film *THE MIRACLE WORKER*, planned the production and began filming, but after less than one week Burt Lancaster replaced him with John Frankenheimer, reportedly because Lancaster wanted a more action-oriented director. (Ironically, Penn would prove to be quite adept with action three years later with *BONNIE AND CLYDE*). Frankenheimer, who had directed Lancaster in *THE YOUNG SAVAGES*, *BIRDMAN OF ALCATRAZ*, and *SEVEN DAYS IN MAY*, overhauled the script to place less emphasis on the French people’s reverence for art and more on Labiche’s superhuman heroics and his confrontations with German officer von Waldheim (Paul Scofield). Like Penn, Frankenheimer had first achieved recognition directing live television dramas in the 1950s. His ambitious “Playhouse 90” productions, such as *DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES* and *OLD MAN*, tested the boundaries of live TV, especially with their deep-focus compositions and intricate camera movements across vast spaces. Similarly, he filmed much of *THE TRAIN* with wide-angle lenses, necessitating meticulous attention to detail from close-up foreground to extreme background. As evidenced in the Lancaster films and in *THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE*, Frankenheimer was a master of composition and lighting in black-and-white, and *THE TRAIN* is often cited as the last great action film in that medium.

**“OUR TRUST”:** Amidst the chases, crashes, and pyrotechnics, *THE TRAIN* does manage to convey the importance of preserving art. This is expressed eloquently by Mlle. Villard (Suzanne Flon), the film’s version of Rose Valland. When initially Labiche refuses to be involved, except possibly to blow up the train (“For certain things, we take the risk, but I won’t waste lives on paintings”), she responds: “They wouldn’t be wasted...those paintings are part of France. This beauty...our special vision, our trust. This is our pride, what we create and hold for the world.” That the Nazi, von Waldheim, also has a deep appreciation of art—far more than does the pragmatic Labiche—adds some complexity to, but does not negate, the basic conflict of good versus evil.

DIRECTED BY **JOHN FRANKENHEIMER**  
(1964) 134 MIN.

RELEASED BY **UNITED ARTISTS**

STORY AND SCREENPLAY BY **FRANKLIN GOEN** AND **FRANK DAVIS** FROM THE BOOK *LE FRONT DE L'ART* BY **ROSE VALLAND**

MUSIC BY **MAURICE JARRE**  
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **JEAN TOURNIER**  
AND **WALTER WOTTITZ**

STARRING **BURT LANCASTER,**  
**PAUL SCOFIELD, JEANNE MOREAU,**  
**MICHEL SIMON, ALBERT REMY, AND**  
**SUZANNE FLON**

**DID YOU KNOW:** IN THE SPECTACULAR AIR RAID ON THE RAIL YARD, THE EXPLOSIONS BLOWING UP THE TRACKS ARE GENUINE (ALTHOUGH CAUSED BY CAREFULLY RIGGED DYNAMITE, NOT AERIAL BOMBARDMENT). FRANKENHEIMER WAS DOING THE FRENCH NATIONAL RAILWAY A FAVOR, AS THE TRACK HAD BEEN SLATED FOR DEMOLITION IN ORDER TO WIDEN THE GAUGE.

**NEXT UP:** JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL EVENING CELEBRATING THE 95TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OLDEST EXTANT FILM DIRECTED BY AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN DIRECTOR, OSCAR MICHEAUX’S *WITHIN OUR GATES* (1920). WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY PROFESSOR CHARLES MUSSER, CO-EDITOR OF *OSCAR MICHEAUX AND HIS CIRCLE: AFRICAN AMERICAN FILMMAKING AND RACE CINEMA OF THE SILENT ERA*, AND LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY DONALD SOSIN. **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11 AT 7:00 PM.**