



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 12, 2017
7:00PM • WHITNEY
HUMANITIES CENTER

UN PROPHÈTE

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



"You don't have to like heroes. The hero in my film is there to illustrate the capacity for resistance of the individual and his ability to make himself his own rules, his own life. I like to ask the question: have I just got one life to live or is there another way? And what is the price to pay for that other way, for inventing myself another way? Will my second life be more costly than my first?"

—Jacques Audiard on UN PROPHÈTE



In the fifth feature film directed by Jacques Audiard, a young French-Algerian man's six-year prison sentence provides his foundation for a career in crime. An inversion of Audiard's 1996 comedy *A SELF-MADE HERO*, this dark bildungsroman transcends the conventions of the crime genre through an emphasis on the inner life of its hero, Malik El Djebena. The film's subjective realism, documentary-style aesthetics, and phantasmagoric elements are complemented by a soundtrack that mixes Alexandre Desplat, Nas, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, and ambient sound recorded in a working prison. "UN PROPHÈTE is indeed that rare thing," writes *The Guardian's* Jason Solomons, "a wholly original piece that feels somehow familiar, the sort of thing you've seen before, but never seen done so well." His colleague Peter Bradshaw observed, "Audiard has created a long, involved, relentlessly brutal but gripping and thrilling picture; it has the rangy, anecdotal feel of something drawn from real life, but its realism somehow accommodates an eerie supernatural shimmer."

Prior to his starring role as Malik, Tahar Rahim had only appeared in small parts in two low-budget films and in the recurring role of Yazid the teenage delinquent in the 2007 television series *LA COMMUNE*. That series was written by Abdel Raouf Dafri, who also wrote the initial script for UN PROPHÈTE. Audiard first encountered Rahim when the two chanced to share a taxi after Audiard visited the LA COMMUNE set, and though the director described the meeting as "love at first sight," he still needed an audition and eight callbacks before casting the young actor as his lead. For the Corsican gang leader César Luciani, a role Audiard described as "an ogre in charge of a kingdom of spiders," he cast veteran actor Niels Arestrup, whose prolific film career began in 1974 with a role in Chantal Akerman's *JE TU IL ELLE*. Audiard and Arestrup first worked together when Arestrup played the doomed, dodgy father in 2005's *THE BEAT THAT MY HEART SKIPPED*, a role that won him his first of three César Awards for Best Supporting Actor, the most awarded to anyone. In addition to its professional actors, UN PROPHÈTE features many ex-convicts as extras. Audiard valued the authenticity they brought to the prison scenes because "they knew how to cross a corridor, how to look at each other, how to interact in open space." The director became interested in making a prison film after witnessing the harsh conditions while screening one of his earlier films in a prison, and UN PROPHÈTE became a touchpoint in debates about French prisons upon its release.

UN PROPHÈTE premiered on May 16, 2009, at the Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Grand Prix and earned raves from critics. A few months later when it won Best Film at the inaugural London Film Festival, jury president Anjelica Huston declared it "a masterpiece, an instant classic, and a perfect film." It went on to earn nine César Awards—including Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor, and Best Supporting Actor—and a nomination for a Best Foreign Language Film Academy Award. *The Village Voice's* Rob Nelson described it as "the most widely valued French underworld thriller since the '60s reign of tough-guy auteur Jean-Pierre Melville," while Kenneth Turan of the *Los Angeles Times* called it "an answered prayer for those who believe that revitalizing classic forms with contemporary attitudes makes for the most compelling kind of cinema."

DIRECTED BY **JACQUES AUDIARD**
WRITTEN BY **ABDEL RAOUF DAFRI, NICOLAS PEUFAILLIT, THOMAS BIDEGAIN, AND JACQUES AUDIARD**
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **STÉPHANE FONTAINE**
MUSIC BY **ALEXANDRE DESPLAT**
(2009) 155 MINS.
STARRING **TAHAR RAHIM, NIELS ARESTRUP, ADEL BENCHERIF, AND REDA KATEB**

DID YOU KNOW: BEFORE ACTING IN FILMS, UN PROPHÈTE STAR TAHAR RAHIM WAS THE SUBJECT OF A FILM. WHILE STUDYING FILM AT UNIVERSITÉ PAUL-VALÉRY, HE WAS PROFILED BY CYRIL MENNEGUN IN THE DOCUMENTARY TAHAR L'ÉTUDIANT, WHICH AIRED ON FRANCE 5 IN 2006. MENNEGUN IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS CÉSAR-WINNING 2011 FEATURE LOUISE WIMMER.

NEXT UP: WE CELEBRATE THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF DIRECTOR STEVEN SPIELBERG'S **AMISTAD**. THE HISTORICAL EPIC—WITH NEW HAVEN CONNECTIONS—STARS ANTHONY HOPKINS, MORGAN FREEMAN, DJIMON HOUNSOU, CHIWETEL EJIOFOR, AND MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY. THE FILM, WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HISTORIAN JOSEPH YANNIELLI, SCREENS ON 35MM ON **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 AT 2:00 PM.**