

Pierre Étaix 5-DVD SET

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The heyday of the slapstick is long past but this comedy form, perhaps the most filmic of all motion picture genres has not really disappeared. Some of its finest post-WWII accomplishments exist in the work of two famous French film comedians: Jacques Tati (1907-82), the creator of the unforgettable Monsieur Hulot and a generation younger, Pierre Étaix (b. 1928) - the master of subtle visual humour recalling Buster Keaton and Max Linder, the French genius of pre-WWI slapstick, and an inspiration of Chaplin. Étaix was undeniably influenced by Tati whom he met in 1954 and worked with for several years; he was assistant-director in Tati's *My Uncle* where he also played a minor role.

Étaix' life and work has been intertwined with the world of circus: He also worked as a circus clown in partnership with Nino Fabbri, and later with his first wife, the film actress and professional clown Annie Fratellini of the famous Fratellini European circus family. The couple founded the first National Circus School in France. Federico Fellini, another filmmaker influenced by the art of the circus and the clown, gave Étaix a role in his 1970 comedy *The Clowns*.

Unlike Tati, however, Étaix is little known beyond the confines of France, and even in his home country his movies were on their way to oblivion, largely because of their unavailability over twenty years due to a legal dispute with a distribution company. After 2008, when sixteen thousand people, including Woody Allen and Jean-Luc Godard, signed a petition in the director's support, the situation was resolved. A five-DVD integral collection was published in France by ARTE Editions late in 2010, restored by Studio 37, la Fondation Groupama Gan pour le Cinéma and La Fondation Technicolor pour le Patrimoine du Cinéma. The DVD set includes the five features and four shorts directed by Étaix, plus two shorts, one of which is directed by Odile Étaix, the artist's second wife.

Author Information

Jan UHDE is Professor Emer. (Film Studies) at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Born in Brno, Czech Republic. Graduated (MA) from the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno; PhD received at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. He taught at the University of Waterloo (1970-2012) where he founded a General and Honours BA program in Film Studies at the Department of Fine Arts.

Publications: *Latent Images: Film in Singapore* Second edition, with Yvonne Ng Uhde (Ridge Books, National University Press of Singapore, 2010); *Latent Images: Film in Singapore*, with Yvonne Ng Uhde (Oxford University Press, 2000); *Latent Images: Film in Singapore CD-ROM* (2003, co-author); *Vision and Persistence: Twenty Years of the Ontario Film Institute* (University of Waterloo Press, 1990) and *Ontario Film Institute Programming Activities Index 1969-1989* (Toronto: Ontario Science Centre, 1990). He co-edited the *Place in Space: Human Culture in Landscape* (Proceedings from the Second International Conference of the Working Group "Culture and Landscape" of the International Association of Landscape Ecology, Pudoc Scientific Publishers, Wageningen, Holland, 1993). Jan Uhde has published articles and reviews in several countries (including Canada, USA, Germany, Italy), participated in international juries at film festivals and presented papers at international conferences in North America and Europe. In 1998/99, he was a visiting researcher at the School for Film and Media Studies, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Singapore.

His professional and research interests focus on Singapore cinema; the identification and distancing mechanisms of the film viewer; the non-authored modifications and manipulation of films; and specific aspects of film history, including the Central European cinema.

He founded KINEMA in 1993.



Figure 1: [Disc 1] *Le soupirant* (*The Suitor*, Pierre Étaix 1962, 83min); *Heureux anniversaire* (*Happy Birthday*, Pierre Étaix 1962, 12min) ¶ [Disc 2] *Yoyo* (*Yoyo*, Pierre Étaix 1964, 92min); *Le cauchemar de Méliès* (*The Nightmare of Méliès*, Pierre Étaix 1988, video, inspired by Méliès' 1899 short *The Artist's Dream*, 4min) ¶ [Disc 3] *Tant qu'on a la santé* (*As Long As You're Healthy*, Pierre Étaix, 1966, 80min); *Rupture* (*Break-Up*, Pierre Étaix 1961, 11min) ¶ [Disc 4] *Le Grand Amour* (*The Great Love*, Pierre Étaix 1969, 87min); *Pierre Étaix, naturellement* (*Pierre Étaix, Naturally*, Odile Étaix 2010, 30min) ¶ [Disc 5] *Pays de cocagne* (*Land of Plenty*, Pierre Étaix 1969, 80min); *En pleine forme* (*Healthy Holidays*, Pierre Étaix 1965-71, 14min); *L'île aux fleurs* (*Flower Island*, Jorge Furtago, chosen by Étaix, 1989, 12min)



Figure 2: Pierre Étaix DVD collection unpacked: ¶ The collection also includes a 116-page hard bound booklet entitled *La grosse tête* (*The Big Head*) which includes a selection of high-quality film stills, photos, drawings, cartoons, texts and documents relating to the life and work of Pierre Étaix, accompanied by six postcards showing posters of Étaix' films. There are no English subtitles but as most Étaix films are pantomimes without dialogue, this is of little consequence for most viewers. Recommended price of the set: EUR 48.00.