

European 60s

Jules and Jim 1962

(Jules et Jim)

Friday, May 30 - Thursday, June 5, 2008



Film Information

Directed by

François Truffaut

Language

French and German
with English subtitles

Running Time

105 minutes

Film Notes

Not long after the release of JULES AND JIM, director François Truffaut gave an interview on French television, much of it devoted to the film's source material—a semi-autobiographical novel by Henri-Pierre Roché published in the early 1950s. During the interview, which you can find on YouTube, Truffaut flipped through his own dog-eared copy of the book, the pages crawling with notes. Upon first discovering the novel, he was blown away by its artistry (see the reverse side for more of his thoughts) and yet also depressed that the cinema of the time, which he had been covering as a critic, would be incapable of bringing to celluloid what made the text so special. It was only after embarking on his own directorial career, and the process of making his seminal debut THE 400 BLOWS, that Truffaut began to see the divide between great contemporary literature and great contemporary cinema as a navigable stretch after all.

What's amazing about JULES AND JIM—at least *one* of the amazing things, anyway—is

that Truffaut created a film that honored the novel while also revolutionizing its own medium. Today, its visual style and techniques (including some especially dexterous camerawork) represent a landmark in cinema. At the time, this was Truffaut creating in the adventurous spirit of the New Wave, but also reflective of his mission to capture the spirit of Roché. JULES AND JIM had to be made in a way that the audience wouldn't take too literally, he said in that interview. Like the book, it needed to leave the impression that these were memories. It needed to at least suggest a narrative distance from the events themselves. "It had to be filmed like an old photo album," Truffaut said.

—Casey



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“But not this one, Jim. Okay?”

More Information

Screenplay by
François Truffaut

Based on the novel by
Henri-Pierre Roché

Featuring
Jeanne Moreau
Oskar Werner
Henri Serre
Vanna Urbino
Boris Bassiak
Anny Nelsen

Cinematography by
Raoul Coutard

Original Music by
Georges Delerue

Film Editing by
Claudine Bouché

Country of Origin
France

“It was interesting how I came across it and fell in love with it. Usually you hear about a book in the press, but this was overlooked when it came out in ‘50 or ‘52. I came across it in ‘56 among some second-hand books in a shop. You know how you leaf through books. I think it was the title that grabbed me. It was the two Js in the title. It has something musical about it...[At the time] I was a film critic and not yet a film director, though I wanted to direct. I became familiar with the book over several years. I read it twice a year. I knew it inside and out. It made me sad to think it did something films couldn’t do. In a movie, if a woman loves two men, one man is nice and the other isn’t. So the idea of being dramatic and yet funny in tone, with two wonderful men and a wonderful woman, and no clear solution... Gradually as I made my first films, I came to think it might be possible to film it after all.”

—François Truffaut

Also Recommended by François Truffaut

The 400 Blows 1959
Shoot the Piano Player 1960
Stolen Kisses 1968
Bed & Board 1970
L'Enfant sauvage 1970
Day for Night 1973