

European 60s

Play Time 1967

Monday, June 16 - Thursday, June 19, 2008



Film Information

Directed by

Jacques Tati

Language

French with English subtitles

Running Time

120 minutes

Film Notes

Director Jacques Tati premiered *PLAY TIME* in December 1967—nearly a decade after the project began. Within months of its first public screening, he was completely bankrupt, forced to surrender the rights to all of his films, and left to seek financing just to regain what he'd lost. *PLAY TIME* had cost a fortune to make, took forever to shoot (almost exactly three years), and in the end cost its filmmaker dearly. But no one could take away from Tati a fact that has only reaffirmed itself in decades since: as ahead-of-its-time crazy as it was, he had made his masterpiece.

Prior to *PLAY TIME*, Tati's films focused on the adventures of a comic character named M. Hulot, played by the director himself. With his newest film, he decided to pull back the frame, filling it with hundreds of characters moving to and fro, speaking this language and that, the sum of their minor parts creating a grand comic ballet about life inside the modern city. As Kent Jones writes for the Criterion Collection, *PLAY TIME* "is a series of giddy encounters between people and things, the wonders of 'modern life' relinquishing their functionality

in favor of an unaccountably rapturous beauty."

To bring this vision to the screen, Tati built one of the most ambitious sets in cinema history—a city unto itself, located on the outskirts of Paris, employing more than 100 construction workers and requiring its own power plant. The scope of "Tatíville," as it was called, drew criticism to Tati, as did his use of the expensive 70mm format. To the director, such arguments had little resonance. "In 70mm I can show people what a modern building is like," he once said. "As in certain drawings, the set is of prime importance in *PLAY TIME*. However it's not the set itself which is the dominant factor, but the use to which it is put."

—Casey



OMAHA'S OWN
NONPROFIT CINEMA
402.933.0259
FILMSTREAMS.ORG



RUTH SOKOL
1340 WEBSTER
OMAHA, NE
FILMSTREAMS

DEVOTED TO THE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FILM AS AN ART FORM

More Information

Written by

Jacques Lagrange
Jacques Tati
Art Buchwald

Featuring

Jacques Tati
Barbara Dennek
Rita Maiden
France Rumilly
France Delahalle
Valérie Camille
Erika Dentzler
Nicole Ray
Yvette Ducreux

Cinematography by

Jean Badal
Andréas Winding

Original Music by

Francis Lemarque

Film Editing by

Gérard Pollicand

Country of Origin

France

“Tati needed a set as vast as the streamlined public buildings and roadways that were soon to change the face of Paris forever. He needed to convey not just the texture of these new spaces but also their scope, in order to demonstrate exactly how they would house that most precious of all resources, human individuality. He elected to shoot his film in the costly 70mm format, with its magnificent widescreen clarity and depth. According to [biographer David] Bellos, Tati visited many factories and airports throughout Europe before his cinematographer Jean Badal came to the conclusion that he needed to build his own skyscraper. Which is exactly what he did.”

—Kent Jones, for the Criterion Collection

Also Recommended, by Ingmar Bergman

Metropolis 1927 (Dir. Lang)
Modern Times 1936 (Dir. Chaplin)
M. Hulot's Holiday 1953 (Dir. Tati)
Mon Oncle 1958 (Dir. Tati)
Brazil 1985 (Dir. Gilliam)