

restored version 2009!

Les Vacances de Monsieur Hulot

nouvelle vague!

The joy of restoring *Mr Hulot's Holiday*

Séverine Wemaere [Head of Thomson Foundation](#) • Gilles Duval [Head of Groupama Gan Foundation](#)

Restoring a film is a singular act, consisting of giving back life to a work that is major or minor, well-known or forgotten, without betraying the intentions of its author, very often deceased. The exercise is difficult and fascinating, and it is above all a lesson in humility. To restore has to delve with delicacy into the life and work of the author to try to pinpoint his/her intentions and doubts, his/her difficulties and satisfactions, pore over his/her shooting notebooks, notes, letters, photos, etc. There is a lot of work involved in understanding the film, before and during the restoration, identifying the original cut made, familiarising oneself with the light or the grain of the period's pictures, rediscovering the sound, or pinpointing certain imperfections. All this becomes possible with the combination of photochemical and digital tools, on condition that one knows when to stop, so as not to distort the original work. And always keeping two goals in mind: restoring to be able to show the film to the greatest number of spectators now, and preserving the original elements in optimal conditions in an appropriate place. Because these originals are the only guarantee that the work will endure beyond any future progress in digital technology.

For these reasons, a restoration is necessarily the fruit of team work that makes it possible to tackle such a colossal project while handling all the doubts and questions that crop up, which also make up all the enjoyment of this experience.

The restored version of *Mr Hulot's Holiday* is the result of a highly fruitful encounter between two foundations acting for film heritage, the Jacques Tati copyright holders and the Cinémathèque. This adventure opened a doorway into the world of Jacques Tati with the aim of restoring life to images damaged by the passing of time. The work involved did not prevent us from enjoying many moments of immense and irrepressible joy. Quite the contrary.

Mr Hulot's Holiday

Un film de Jacques Tati, France

Prix Louis Delluc 1953 • Prix de la Critique Internationale, Festival de Cannes 1953

Prix Femina, Bruxelles 1953 • Prix du Festival de Berlin 1953



AVEC JACQUES TATI (MONSIEUR HULOT) - NATHALIE PASCAUD (MARTINE) - MICHELINE ROLLA (LA TANTE), VALENTINE CAMAX (LA DAME ANGLAISE) - LOUIS PERRAULT (FRED) - ANDRÉ DUBOIS (LE COMMANDANT) - LUCIEN FRÉGIS (LE GÉRANT DE L'HÔTEL) - RAYMOND CARL (LE SERVEUR) - RENÉ LACOURT (LE PROMENEUR) - MARGUERITE GÉRARD (LA PROMENEUSE) - SUZY WILLY (LA FEMME DU COMMANDANT) - MICHELLE BRABO (L'ESTIVANTE) - GEORGES ADLIN (LE SUD-AMÉRICAIN LATIN LOVER) - MONSIEUR SCHMUTZ, L'HOMME D'AFFAIRES, EST INTERPRÉTÉ PAR LE MARI DE NATHALIE PASCAUD ET NON CRÉDITÉ AU GÉNÉRIQUE.

SCÉNARIO ORIGINAL, ADAPTATION ET DIALOGUES JACQUES TATI, HENRI MARQUET AVEC LA COLLABORATION DE PIERRE AUBERT ET JACQUES LAGRANGE - IMAGES JACQUES MERCANTON & JEAN MOUSSELLE - PRISE DE VUE PIERRE ANCRENAZ & ANDRÉ VILLARD ASSISTÉS DE LE CHEVALLIER FABIEN TORDJMAN, ANDRÉ MARQUETTE - MONTAGE JACQUES GRASSI, GINOU BRETONEICHE, SUZANNE BARON - MUSIQUE ALAIN ROMANS - SONORISATION ROGER COSSON - PRISE DE SON JACQUES CARRÈRE - DÉCORS HENRI SCHMITT, ROGER BRIAUCCOURT - ACCESSOIRES PIERRE CLAUZEL, ANDRÉ PIERDEL - PRODUCTION FRED ORAIN / CADY-FILMS - ADMINISTRATION BERNARD MAURICE

As holidaymakers invade the Hôtel de la Plage, the whimsical and offbeat Mr. Hulot, arrives in his spluttering, antiquated Salmson motorcar. Through his cheerful clumsiness, he keeps disturbing the peace and quiet of the city dwellers on holiday. In a kayak, on horseback, on the beach, at the tennis court, in the hotel dining room, in a cemetery or during a picnic, Hulot sets off gags and disasters. His mere presence is an offence to the conventional and the serious-minded. His elegant against-the-tide buffoonery and a gallery of unforgettable portraits make this summer holiday in the 1950s a masterpiece of poetic visual comedy.



Mr Hulot's holidays



My Uncle



PlayTime



Traffic

About Jacques Tati

Jacques Tati was born Jacques Tatischeff in 1907. A great sportsman, his teammates appreciated his talent in miming the rugby matches they had just played. But Tati dreamed of cinema. He was fascinated by American slapstick, W.C. Fields, and particularly Buster Keaton. In the 1930s, he played several music-hall shows and as of 1932, he shot "Oscar, Champion de Tennis" with his friend Rhum the clown, followed by "Gai dimanche" in 1935. In 1936, he played in "Soigne ton gauche", a short film by a newcomer by the name of... René Clément. Tati then directed a 400 meter reel called "L'École des Facteurs" sowing the seeds for "Jour de Fête", which he finished in 1949... But the professionals refused to program it for a whole year: "It's funny, but do you really think the audience will get it? There are no big stars in this"... Yet despite its exceptional commercial success, Tati abandoned the "postman" for coming up with a thinking character: "I've seen this fellow somewhere!". "Les Vacances de Monsieur Hulot" was adopted with enthusiasm both by the public and the critics. This worldwide success carried on. However, Jacques Tati remained very cautious about preserving his artistic freedom. In 1956, he went on to direct "Mon Oncle", another episode in the life of Monsieur Hulot. "PlayTime" would follow in 1967, inspired by the airports Tati passed through while accompanying "Mon Oncle" around the world, captivated by their uniformity, then considered modern! "Traffic" in 1971, "Parade" in 1973, and "Forza Bastia" made with his daughter Sophie Tatischeff in 1978 were his last films.

The restoration of *Mr Hulot's Holiday*...

Why restore *Mr Hulot's Holiday*?

Over the years, exhibition prints have circulated widely, the internegatives and intermediate elements have been worn by excessive printings. Apart from the restoration of *Mr Hulot's Holiday*, the aim of this project is to produce preservation master elements for long-term conservation and to make the film available to the widest possible audience in high-quality release prints.

The different versions

In 1951, Jacques Tati began the shooting of *Mr Hulot's Holiday*, his second feature film, two years after *Jour de Fête*. The film was first released in 1953. Then, in the early 60s, Tati re-edited the film, cutting out shots and extending others. He had Alain Romans' score re-orchestrated and overhauled the music and sound mixing. It was at this point that he also added the final color shot of the stamp and postmark, indicating the postman's invisible hand. Later, in 1977, a delighted new generation discovered the film. Encouraged by this new success and inspired by Steven Spielberg's *Jaws*, Tati shot new footage on the beach at St-Marc-sur-Mer, which he then cut into the last version in 1978.

The restoration

The camera negative

The restoration of *Mr Hulot's Holiday* was made possible thanks to the availability of the film's master element: the camera negative. In the wake of the film's various versions and the addition of the visual effects, the camera negative – a blend of mostly nitrate film stock and acetate film stock – endured re-cutting and re-splicing in the course of a creative process covering more than 25 years.

The restoration: objectives and challenges

• The image

In order to **protect the camera negative**, it was crucial to have it restored manually by the Preservation Department of Technicolor North Hollywood. Their expertise revealed how the negative was riddled with splices as well as a multiple grading notches on the edges of the film, which made it difficult to put it through the printer. To cope with these technical defects, a contact printer was calibrated and adjusted so as to stabilize the image in the gate during its printing.

The interpositive made, it was scanned **to assemble the complete cut of the film with the addition of the opening credits and the insertion of the final shot, the only color shot**. Documentation and analysis of available sources showed how there were different versions possible for this final shot (appearance of stamps and postmarks, one after the other or simultaneously, montage with or without fade to black). The accounts of Pierre Etaix in particular contributed to defining the appropriate sequence. This element was in poor condition, making it impossible to include it in the final cut. Only digital tools allowed us to recreate this shot punctuated by a fade and to reproduce the stamp's original sheen. All the digital work was done and supervised by Tom Burton at Technicolor Digital Services in Burbank, California, one of the labs capable of carrying out this kind of complex restoration, equipped as it is with high-performance digital platforms to deal with specific film damage.

It was indeed this question of balance between photochemical and digital procedures that had to be dealt with.

In the case of *Mr Hulot's Holiday*, a major part of the restoration involved the improvement or toning down of the transitions between shots. Physically, these transitions are consistent with the editing splices which, when printed and scanned, sometimes created distortions in the image or splice bumps. As for the fades to black, the digital tool certainly helped improve the smoothness of these effects which facilitated the narrative flow of the film.

• The sound

The restoration of the soundtrack was based on the sound negative using the film's last mix (the 1978 version). L.E. Diapason, a post-production facility specializing in sound restoration, began by manually eliminating sound defects such as the "plops" produced by the numerous splices. The sound balance was dictated not by the voices (which generally serve as markers) but by the music because, as is often the case in this film, the voices occupy the same plane as the background sounds. In a few silent scenes, it was particularly important to conserve a slight hiss, thus providing sound texture. Even as it respects the bits of deliberately incomprehensible conversation, the film gains in intelligibility.

This film has been restored by
The Groupama Gan Foundation for Cinema,
Thomson Foundation for Film & Television Heritage,
Les Films de Mon Oncle and with the support of
La Cinémathèque française



The Groupama Gan Foundation for Cinema

Founded in 1987, the Groupama Gan Foundation for the Cinema is today one of the key private partners for French films. It has accompanied 130 filmmakers in making their first feature film, thanks to project grants. Today its support is recognised as a mark of quality.

The Foundation also promotes more than 30 film festivals in France and around the world. At the Festival de Cannes, it has been awarding for several years the *Un Certain Regard - Fondation Groupama Gan pour le Cinéma* Prize.

The Foundation also champions the restoration of many film classics.

It has notably participated in the restoration of *Jour de Fête*, *PlayTime* and *My Uncle* by Jacques Tati, ...

This year alone it participated in the restoration of the Turkish director Lufti Akad's first film *Strike the Whore*; two documentaries by Manuel de Oliveira; and, of course, Jacques Tati's *Mr Hulot's Holiday*!

It also funded the release of the uncut version of Michelangelo Antonioni's documentary *China-Chung Kuo*, as well as the production of *Henri-Georges Clouzot's Inferno* by Serge Bromberg.

www.fondation-groupama-gan.com



Thomson Foundation for Film & Television Heritage

Founded in 2006, the Thomson Foundation for Film & Television Heritage is a non-profit entity, working worldwide for the preservation and promotion of films and the audiovisual heritage, which reflect the history and culture of a country. The Thomson Foundation operates as a priority in countries whose archives are at risk. Three main lines guide its programs: preserving the film heritage as a key part of a country's memory, promoting and highlighting the film heritage in order to show it to and share it with large audience, and training and raising the awareness of all those who can play a part in saving this heritage.

The Foundation currently conducts programmes in more than 8 countries: mainly India, Cambodia, Thailand, USA and France and, more recently, the Palestinian territories and Mozambique. Each year, one of the objectives of this Foundation is to restore a key work of international cinema in order to better raise the audience's awareness about the importance of its film heritage and the risks to films when not properly stored. In 2008, the Foundation restored *Lola Montès* by Max Ophüls with the Cinémathèque française and organised an active promotion of the film around the world with debates on film heritage.

www.thomsonfilmfoundation.org

Les Films de Mon Oncle

Les Films de Mon Oncle was set up in 2001 on the initiative of Sophie Tatischeff, Jérôme Deschamps and Macha Makeïeff to preserve, restore and circulate Jacques Tati's works. The artistic and cultural missions of Les Films de Mon Oncle allow audiences as well as researchers to (re-)discover the work of the film-maker, his archives, and to ensure its influence around the world.

www.tativille.com



contact

gilles.dual@groupama.com
seberine.memaere@thomson.net