



Festival of Festivals

International Film Festival Saint-Petersburg

23 - 29 June 2010

June 17th, 2010

Retrospective of films directed by Alain Resnais

Biography

One of France's most distinctive and highly regarded directors, Alain Resnais was born in Vannes, France, in 1922. He studied at L'Institut hautes études cinématographiques before starting a career as a film-maker in the mid-1940s, making short films. Of these, the most celebrated is *Nuit et brouillard* (1955), an eye-opening and devastatingly poignant documentary about deportations and Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War.

Resnais' first full-length film was *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), an unusual romantic drama which was developed from an idea for a short documentary. The film was critically acclaimed in France and abroad and won Resnais instant fame, establishing him as a major director of the French New Wave. His following film, *L'année dernière à Marienbad* (1961), was no less successful, a remarkable interplay of time and memory with some unforgettable visual imagery.

Although less prolific and reactionary than some of his New Wave contemporaries, Alain Resnais continued to make original and provocative cinema which was, for the most part, well received by the critics. This included films such as *Muriel* (1963), *La guerre est finie* (1966), *Stavisky* (1974) and *Providence* (1977), the latter of which won him seven awards at the Césars in 1978.

After a few disappointments in the 1980s, Alain Resnais regained his reputation for inventive and highly artistic cinema in the 1990s. In *Smoking/No Smoking* (based on a series of plays by the distinguished English playwright Alan Ayckbourn), the stark minimalism which characterises Resnais' later films is carried to its logical extreme, although the film is utterly compelling. This was followed by *On connaît la chanson* (1997) and *Pas sur la bouche* (2003), in which the director experimented with musical ideas, inviting favourable comparisons with the work of the English television writer Dennis Potter.

Source: © James Travers 2004, Alain Resnais, http://filmsdefrance.com/FDF_aresnais.html, 11.6.2010