

MidCentury Productions & I WAKE UP DREAMING present  
**THE FRENCH HAD A NAME FOR IT**  
French Film Noir, 1946-1964 • November 14-17, 2014  
ROXIE THEATRE

Everyone knows that the French (specifically, journalist Nino Frank...) coined the term *film noir*.

But not everyone knows just how immersed the French became in the production of their own *films noirs* in the years following World War II.

With that in mind, and noting the rising awareness that film noir was (and is) an international phenomenon, legendary programmer Elliot Lavine has teamed up with MidCentury Productions Executive Director Don Malcolm to assemble a twelve film, four day mini-extravaganza that will take audiences at the Roxie Theatre on a twisted, feverish journey into the heart of Gallic darkness.

San Francisco audiences who had their appetites whetted for foreign noir earlier in 2014 can do no better than to congregate at the Roxie from November 14-17 to discover the hidden treasures of French film noir that this landmark series will unearth for them.

The festival will feature familiar international stars—**Jean Gabin, Brigitte Bardot, Simone Signoret, Lino Ventura**—but will place them in the context of lurid ménages and murderous deceptions that have been given a uniquely French twist.

It will also probe deeply into the reservoir of actors and directors whose work in France during this time frame has been unjustly neglected for the past half-century.

“It seems that the Nouvelle Vague, which revered film noir, ironically managed to push much of the French film noir movement that preceded it into the shadows,” Malcolm notes. “Only a handful these films have resurfaced in America thus far—RIFI, THE WAGES OF FEAR, BOB LE FLAMBEUR, GRISBI, to name a few—but that’s just the tip of the iceberg.”

“By the time this festival ends,” Lavine promises, “those who’ve seen these twelve films will realize just how well the French embraced the noir style—and they won’t be able to stop talking about the sexy, scheming blondes who dominate the action.”

It’s not just Bardot, who’ll be seen twice—as the leggy streetwalker opposite Jean Gabin in EN CAS DE MALHEUR (aka LOVE IS MY PROFESSION) and as the murder-trial defendant in Henri-Georges Clouzot’s social problem thriller LA VERITÉ. The bevy of blonde French bombshells bubbling under Bardot is astonishing.

“Mylene Demongeot, Marina Vlady, Odile Versois, Barbara Laage, and Cecile Aubry are simply incredible,” Malcolm enthuses. “The French bring a fully adult dimension to their conception of the *femme fatale*, and these performances prove that in spades!”

But even the non-blondes—the legendary Simone Signoret in *DEDÉE D’ANVERS*, Daniele Delorme in *VOICI LES TEMPS DES ASSASSINS* (aka *DEADLIER THAN THE MALE*) and Catherine Rouvel in *CHAIR DE POULE* (aka *HIGHWAY PICKUP*)—will leave audiences breathless.

“We are going to have to hold a contest to see who the audience considers to be the nastiest of all the bad girls,” Lavine grins. “It will be a very tough choice!”

In addition to reviving lesser-known works by master directors (Henri-Georges Clouzot, Julien Duvivier), lesser-known but equally worthy directors who excelled in French noir (Rene Clement, Claude Autant-Lara, Yves Allegret, Henri Verneuil, Robert Hossein, Eduoard Molinaro) will also be showcased.

But the most incendiary double bill, concluding the festival on Monday night, November 17, showcases two of France’s most legendary midcentury literary figures—two writers who could not be further apart: Jean-Paul Sartre and Boris Vian.

Sartre’s play *LA PUTAIN RESPECTUEUSE* and Vian’s novel *I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVES* both tackle the still-controversial subject of American racism, and the on-screen results are electrifying.

“Boris Vian is the embodiment of French film noir in all its glory and its excess,” Lavine notes. “He was the first person to embrace the idea. *I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVES*, which appeared in 1946 just as the term film noir was being coined, fuses pulp fiction and social commentary in a unique way that is still controversial and disturbing today.”

“And Vian literally died for that idea of noir,” Malcolm adds. “He fought director Michel Gast throughout the production of the film version, and at the premiere of *I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVES*, he stood up after the first ten minutes, cursing the screen. After a moment or two of vitriol, he suddenly clutched his chest, collapsed—and died right on the spot!”

While Roxie patrons are encouraged not to follow in Vian’s footsteps during the screening of “The French Had A Name For It,” there’s little doubt that they will be enraptured by the rediscovery of a new treasure trove of dark thrillers done only as the French could do it.

For more information call/visit websites:

Roxie Theatre (415) 863-1087 [www.roxie.com](http://www.roxie.com)

MidCentury Productions (310) 883-5298 [www.mid-centuryproductions.com](http://www.mid-centuryproductions.com)

**THE FRENCH HAD A NAME FOR IT • FRENCH FILM NOIR, 1946-1964**  
FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Friday, November 14

**LA VERITÉ (Clouzot, 1960) 7:45 • MANON (Clouzot, 1949) 6:00, 10:00**

Saturday, November 15

**LES MAUDITS (Clement, 1947) 1:30 • UNE MANCHE ET LA BELLE aka A KISS FOR A KILLER (Verneuil, 1957) 3:30**

**UN TEMOIN DANS LA VILLE aka WITNESS IN THE CITY (Molinaro, 1959) 8:00 • TOI LE VENIN aka BLONDE IN A WHITE CAR (Hossein, 1958) 6:15, 10:00**

Sunday, November 16

**DEDEE D'ANVERS (Yves Allegret, 1948) 1:30 • EN CAS DE MALHEUR aka LOVE IS MY PROFESSION (Claude Autant-Lara, 1958) 3:15**

**CHAIR DE POULE aka HIGHWAY PICKUP (Duvivier, 1964) 5:30, 9:30 • VOICI LE TEMPS DES ASSASSINS aka DEADLIER THAN THE MALE (Duvivier, 1956) 7:30**

Monday, November 17

**LA P... RESPECTUEUSE aka THE RESPECTUL PROSTITUTE (Pagliero/Brabant, 1952) 6:00, 9:30 • J'IRAI CRACHER SUR VOS TOMBES aka I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVES (Gast, 1959) 7:45**