



Jim Hillier
1941 – 2014

A Tribute

As a small tribute to Jim, who died in August after a long battle with leukemia, we are republishing two of his articles for *Movie* – the first from 1970/71 and the second from 1990, in what proved to be the penultimate issue of the journal.

Jim joined the Editorial Board of *Movie* in 1970. His name first appears in No. 18 (Winter 1970/71); it disappears from the new format *Movie* 20 (Spring 1975), to be replaced in No. 21 (Autumn 1975) and successive issues by the mysterious Joe Stefanos; it then reappears, displacing Joe, in *Movie* 27/28 (Winter 1980/Spring 1981). Joe Stefanos was of course Jim, paying homage to one of his favourite *films noir*, *Out of the Past* (Jacques Tourneur, 1947), while wittily observing the discretion required during his years in the Education Department of the British Film Institute.

Movie 18 contained two articles by Jim, the first (republished here) on Eric Rohmer's *Ma Nuit chez Maud* (1969) and the second on Jacques Demy's *Model Shop* (1969), both articles subtly attentive to the moral and aesthetic intricacies of the movies. Shortly before, he had contributed an essay on *Masculin/Féminin* to the *Movie* paperback on Jean-Luc Godard. These interests in French cinema and film culture continued as important threads in Jim's life and career, leading much later to his widely praised editorship of two volumes of translations from *Cahiers du Cinéma* (1985 and 1992 respectively), covering the key periods of the 1950s and 1960 – 1968.

In Jim's contributions to *Movie* from No. 21 (Autumn 1975) we can see three other threads: his wish to foster writing about television drama, at a time when serious critical engagement was still limited; and, in New Hollywood and alternative forms in film, two related fields which came to inform a good deal of his teaching and writing.

Jim's critical interests, whether in television or New Hollywood, were always informed by a concern with production contexts. For *Movie* 21 he shared in an extended interview feature on the hugely popular series *Upstairs Downstairs*. For *Movie* 33 (Winter 1989) he interviewed the producer (and one of the founding editors of *Movie*), Mark Shivas, about his extensive career in British TV. The same issue contained Jim's article on the American crime series, *Cagney and Lacey*. His research into New Hollywood industry contexts was represented in *Movie* 31/32 (Winter 1986) by 'The Economics of Independence: Roger Corman and New World Pictures 1970-80', co-authored with his friend, the film and TV director Aaron Lipstadt, but was manifested most extensively in his *Movie* book, *The New Hollywood* (1992), a major study of the changing Hollywood industry, notable for attention to television and

to emergent strands of film-making by women and African Americans.

The article on *Jennifer on my Mind* (Noel Black 1971) in *Movie* 21 (1975) is preoccupied, in a way that characterised all his critical writing on New Hollywood and alternative forms, with the challenge the film posed to familiar categories and conventions and therefore to critical response. His other two articles on individual films engage more emphatically with alternatives to Hollywood traditions. In *Movie* 27/28 (Winter 1980/Spring 1981) he wrote on Jon Jost's *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* (1977), opening with a rebuke to the journal for not engaging with American cinema beyond Hollywood, and then developing a characteristically questioning and reasoned account of Jost's radical 'address to Hollywood'. Jim's final article for *Movie*, on Hollis Frampton's (*nostalgia*) (1971) (*Movie* 34/35 [Winter 1990]), which we republish here, is a model of how to write about an avant-garde film. It perfectly exemplifies the strengths that also characterised Jim's teaching in this area: a desire to persuade others of the pleasures of the avant-garde; an approach via methodical description (acknowledging the difficulty of the task) to the structures and methods of the film; a skillful teasing out of the dynamics of response and richness of effect; all informed but never overwhelmed by wider contexts for thinking about structural film and other alternative forms. It is a brilliant piece which deserves to be more widely known.

Jim had a gift for, and very much enjoyed, collaboration. There is evidence of this in the TV interviews and the article with Aaron Lipstadt, and also in the interview with Stanley Donen (*Movie* 24, Spring 1977), which Jim conducted on his own but armed with questions from several colleagues – all duly credited. Outside *Movie*, he worked collaboratively often and in areas that spanned several of his abiding enthusiasms: he wrote *Studies in Documentary* (1972) with Alan Lovell; co-edited *Howard Hawks: American Artist* (1996) with Peter Wollen; and in his last years co-authored *100 Films Noir* (2009) with Alastair Phillips, *100 Documentary Films* (2009) with Barry Keith Grant, and *100 Film Musicals* (2011) with Douglas Pye.

We are paying tribute here mainly to Jim's long association with *Movie*. Several of us on the Editorial Board of *Movie: A Journal of Film Criticism*, of which he was a founder member, had of course known Jim in other contexts (some of us for many years) and have warm memories of him as colleague, collaborator, teacher, friend. As many people have testified since he died, Jim was always wonderfully supportive, unfailingly generous, modest, gentle, and kind.

Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to Jim's wife, Fiona Morey, and Jim's children, Aaron, Amy, Joachim and Martha for allowing us to select and republish the articles for this tribute.

Jim Hillier's Contributions to *Movie*

Movie 18, Winter 1970/71.

'Eric Rohmer's *Ma Nuit chez Maud*', 18-20.

'Jacques Demy's *Model Shop*', 24-25

Movie 19, Winter 1971/72 Elia Kazan Issue.

'Out of the 40s', 14-16.

'Kazan and Williams', 17-18.

'*East of Eden*', 22-23

Movie 21, Autumn 1975.

'*Jennifer on my Mind*', 18-21.

(with Charles Barr and V.F. Perkins) 'The Making of a Television Series: *Upstairs, Downstairs*', 46-63.

Movie 22, Spring 1976.

'Television and Criticism', 63-64 (as Joe Stefanos).

Movie 24, Spring 1977: The Musical.

'Interview with Stanley Donen', 26-35.

Movie 27/28, Winter 1980/Spring 1981: American Cinema in the 70s.

'*Last Chants for a Slow Dance*', 109-116

Movie 31/32, Winter 1986: Reaganite Entertainment.

(with Aaron Lipstadt) 'The Economics of Independence: Roger Corman and New World Pictures 1970-80', 43-53.

Movie 33, Winter 1989.

'*Cagney and Lacey*', 1-14.

(with Charles Barr) Interview with Mark Shivas, 15-30.

Movie 34/35, Winter 1990: Interpretation.

'(*nostalgia*) (1971)', 98-102.