



French film director and screenwriter **Jean Delannoy** was born on January 12, 1908, in Noisy-le-Sec, in the Seine department (now Seine-Saint-Denis), and died on June 18, 2008, in Guainville, in the Eure-et-Loir department.

Between his first work, *Paris-Deauville*, which appeared on screens in 1934, and his last production, *Marie de Nazareth* (Marie of Nazareth), in 1995, Jean Delannoy wrote and directed close to 50 films over a period of more than 60 years and worked with many of the great actors of the last century.

Born on January 12, 1908, in Noisy-le-Sec, Jean Delannoy started his film career as a set designer and then took on successive positions as an actor and an editor before finally launching into writing and directing. This true craftsman of “French-quality” cinema was one of the greatest adaptors of literary works for the big screen, along the lines of — in a different genre — a Stanley Kubrick.

He became known to the general public through working with Jean Cocteau on his film *L'éternel retour* (The Eternal Return) in 1943, and then continued along this path by directing *La symphonie pastorale* (The Pastoral Symphony), a film inspired by the work of André Gide, which garnered him the Palme d'Or and principal actor Michèle Morgan a Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival.

Jean Delannoy would go on to enjoy resounding successes throughout his lengthy career, not

only for movies that remain well-known today, such as *Notre-Dame de Paris* (The Hunchback of Notre Dame) with Gina Lollobrigida and Anthony Quinn, but also for

*La Princesse de Clèves*

(Princess of Cleves) and

*Le bossu*

(The Humpback). By the late '40s, Jean Delannoy was already one of the most important directors on the French film scene.

During the '50s, he worked on several occasions with Jean Gabin, in particular on the films *Maigret et l'affaire Saint-Fiacre*

(Maigret and the St. Fiacre Case),

*Maigret tend un piège*

(Maigret Sets a Trap),

*La minute de vérité*

(The Moment of Truth),

*Le baron de l'écluse*

(The Baron of the Locks) and

*Chiens perdus sans colliers*

(Lost Dogs without Collars).

Jean Delannoy also directed such well-known films as *Le soleil des voyous* (Action Man) in 1967;

*Les Sultans*

(The Sultans) in 1966, starring Philippe Noiret and Louis Jourdan; and

*Pas folle la guêpe*

(Not Dumb, the Bird) in 1972, starring Anny Duperey and Daniel Ceccaldi.

In 1968, Jean Delannoy and other filmmakers of his generation were criticized for their academicism by the filmmakers of the French New Wave; nevertheless, his films were to remain among the most popular with viewers whenever they were broadcast on television.

In addition to his creative activities, Jean Delannoy was the president of the Association des Auteurs de Films from 1965 to 1967, of the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques (IDHEC), and of the Syndicat National des Auteurs et des Compositeurs from 1976 to 1981.

In 1987, Jean Delannoy suggested to the [great contemporary artist](#) Georges Yatriidès that he direct a feature-length film about his life and his oeuvre.

He wrote in his proposal: “The exceptional quality of your paintings has made me decide to embark upon a film inspired by the originality of your works and by aspects of your own life. For me it will be the apotheosis of my long career.” Unfortunately, the film never became a reality; despite the gratitude shown by Yatridès towards Jean Delannoy, his circumstances made the project unfeasible.

Besides his Palme d’Or, he was given awards at the Venice and Berlin film festivals, and he received several official decorations, including the ribbon of Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour.