

Paul Grimault's Biography

The son of an archaeologist, Paul Grimault was born on March 23, 1905 at Neuilly-sur-Seine, just outside Paris. A draughtsman by vocation, he studied at the Ecole Germain-Pilon then went to work in the Pomone art workshop at the Bon Marché stores.

After his military service, he worked as a furniture designer, and then in 1930, went to work for the Damour advertising agency where he met Jacques Prévert.

In 1931, he began making experimental animation films and five years later went on to found the Les Gémeaux production company, making advertising animations.

When the war broke out, Grimault was working on **Gô chez les Oiseaux**, his first big project. This was the first time since Emile Cohl stopped working in 1917 that a French animator had created such an ambitious project.

Unfortunately, Grimault's team parted due to the war, and Grimault found himself fighting in Casablanca. After their demobilisation, the team was reunited and was rescued from economic uncertainty by the national lottery, and their film, which had been interrupted by the outbreak of war, was released in October 1943, entitled **Les Passagers de la Grande Ourse**.

As the only animation production house in occupied Europe, Les Gémeaux quickly found profitability. Along with the growing company, Grimault was able to produce and direct several animations including **Le Marchand de Notes**, **L'Épouvantail**, and **Le Voleur de Paratonnerres**. Through these films, Grimault was able to express his unique poetic approach, his style, rhythm and his taste for fantasy. Financial difficulties meant certain imperfections, but these imperfections gave a certain charm to Grimault's work and **Le Voleur de Paratonnerres** won first prize at the 1946 Venice festival.

In 1947, Grimault made **Le Petit Soldat**, developed in collaboration with Jacques Prévert. Given the quality and originality of the fruit of the collaboration of these two poets, it is surprising that Grimault and Prévert had not collaborated sooner on a project.

Immediately afterwards, the two set to work on what would become the first feature-length animation to be made entirely in France: **The curious adventures of Mr. Bird**. After several setbacks and difficulties, the film was

released in 1953 in a version completed by the producer, and not approved by Grimault and Prévert.

This experience led Grimault to found his own production company, Les Films Paul Grimault, in 1951. He made advertising animations and short films at the beginning. Then in 1977, Paul Grimault once again took up **The curious adventures of Mr. Bird** to remake it how he wanted. It won the Prix Louis Delluc in 1979 and was released in its final version in 1980 under the title **The King and Mister Bird**.

Paul Grimault's last animated film, **The Turning Table**, was made in 1988, written and directed with Jacques Demy, and featuring the voice of Grimault alongside that of Anouk Aimée. Paul Grimault died on 29 March 1994.

A Chevalier of Arts and Letters, Paul Grimault won the following prizes during his career:

Honorary César (1989)

Prix Louis Delluc for The King and Mister Bird (1979)

Grand Prix at the Rio de Janeiro Festival (1951)

Grand Prix for Animation at the Prague Festival (1950)

International Grand Prix at the Venice Biennale (1946 & 1948)

Prix Emile Reynaud (1943)