

natalie wood in the great race

natalie wood in the great race represents a memorable chapter in classic American cinema, showcasing the actress's charm and talent in the 1965 comedy film "The Great Race." This article explores Natalie Wood's role in the movie, her performance, and the film's significance in her career. Additionally, it delves into the production background, the film's plot, and the cultural impact of this popular comedy. Known for her versatility and screen presence, Natalie Wood contributed significantly to the film's success and enduring appeal. Readers will gain insight into how her involvement shaped the movie and how "The Great Race" remains a beloved classic. The following sections provide a detailed overview of these aspects.

- Natalie Wood's Role in The Great Race
- The Great Race: Plot and Production
- Performance and Critical Reception
- Impact on Natalie Wood's Career
- Legacy of The Great Race and Natalie Wood's Contribution

Natalie Wood's Role in The Great Race

Character Overview

Natalie Wood starred as Maggie DuBois in "The Great Race," a character that stands out for her wit, intelligence, and determination. Maggie DuBois is a spirited and ambitious journalist who joins the high-stakes automobile race from New York to Paris. Her role adds a dynamic layer of humor and intrigue to the film's storyline, serving as both a love interest and a clever adversary to the male protagonists. Wood's portrayal emphasizes Maggie's strong personality and quick thinking, distinguishing her character in a male-dominated narrative.

Character Development and Screen Presence

Wood's Maggie DuBois is notable for breaking the mold of typical female roles in 1960s comedies. She is assertive, resourceful, and actively participates in the plot's action sequences. Her screen presence blends charm with comedic timing, providing a balance to the film's slapstick humor. Natalie Wood's ability to portray a multi-dimensional character contributed to the film's appeal, making Maggie DuBois a memorable figure in classic American film history.

The Great Race: Plot and Production

Synopsis of the Film

"The Great Race" is a slapstick comedy that centers around a car race from New York to Paris, featuring eccentric characters and elaborate stunts. The storyline pits the heroic and fearless Race conductor against the villainous and conniving Professor Fate, with Natalie Wood's Maggie DuBois playing a pivotal role in the unfolding events. The film combines adventure, romance, and humor, creating a lighthearted narrative that captivated audiences upon its release.

Production Background

The film was directed by Blake Edwards and produced by Warner Bros. The production was notable for its large-scale set pieces, detailed period costumes, and innovative special effects, particularly in the race sequences. Natalie Wood was cast to bring a strong female presence to the film, complementing the star-studded cast that included Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon. The production spanned several months, with extensive location shoots and carefully choreographed action scenes to maintain the film's comedic and adventurous tone.

- Director: Blake Edwards
- Production Company: Warner Bros.
- Release Year: 1965
- Filming Locations: California, Nevada, and other sites
- Genre: Comedy, Adventure

Performance and Critical Reception

Natalie Wood's Acting and Chemistry

Critics praised Natalie Wood's performance in "The Great Race" for its energy and comedic timing. Her chemistry with co-stars Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon was highlighted as a key element that elevated the film's entertainment value. Wood's ability to navigate the film's physical comedy and witty dialogue demonstrated her versatility as an actress. The role allowed her to showcase both her dramatic and comedic skills, contributing to the film's overall success.

Critical and Audience Response

Upon release, "The Great Race" received mixed to positive reviews, with particular commendation for the performances and visual spectacle. Natalie Wood's portrayal of Maggie DuBois was frequently noted as a standout, bringing a fresh and engaging female perspective to the story. The film was appreciated for its humor and lavish production, securing a loyal fan base over the years. It has since been regarded as a classic comedy with enduring appeal.

Impact on Natalie Wood's Career

Career Milestone

Natalie Wood's role in "The Great Race" marked an important milestone in her career, highlighting her ability to lead in a major comedic production. Having already established herself in dramatic and romantic roles, this film expanded her repertoire. It demonstrated her adaptability and helped solidify her status as a versatile and bankable star in Hollywood during the 1960s.

Influence on Future Roles

The success and visibility of Natalie Wood's performance in "The Great Race" influenced the types of roles she was offered subsequently. It opened opportunities for more varied and dynamic characters, allowing her to explore different genres. The film's popularity contributed to her continued prominence in the entertainment industry throughout the decade.

Legacy of The Great Race and Natalie Wood's Contribution

Enduring Popularity of the Film

"The Great Race" remains a beloved classic comedy, appreciated for its humor, elaborate stunts, and charismatic performances. Its nostalgic portrayal of early 20th-century adventurism and slapstick comedy continues to engage audiences. Natalie Wood's role is often cited as a key factor in the film's charm and lasting appeal, highlighting her contribution to cinematic history.

Natalie Wood's Lasting Influence

Natalie Wood's performance in "The Great Race" exemplifies her talent and versatility, leaving a lasting imprint on the film industry. Her portrayal of Maggie DuBois is remembered as a vibrant and pioneering female character in a genre often dominated by male leads. Wood's work in this film contributes to her legacy as one of Hollywood's iconic actresses of the 20th century.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who did Natalie Wood play in the movie 'The Great Race'?

Natalie Wood played the character Maggie DuBois in the 1965 film 'The Great Race.'

What is the significance of Natalie Wood's role in 'The Great Race'?

Natalie Wood's role as Maggie DuBois was significant because she portrayed a spirited and determined journalist competing in a comedic cross-country race, showcasing her comedic timing and charm.

How was Natalie Wood's performance received in 'The Great Race'?

Natalie Wood's performance was well-received, with critics praising her charisma, comedic skills, and chemistry with co-stars Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon.

Did Natalie Wood perform any stunts or special scenes in 'The Great Race'?

While Natalie Wood did not perform major stunts, she was involved in several physically demanding and comedic scenes that highlighted her versatility as an actress.

Who were Natalie Wood's co-stars in 'The Great Race'?

Natalie Wood starred alongside Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon in 'The Great Race.'

Was Natalie Wood nominated for any awards for her role in 'The Great Race'?

Natalie Wood did not receive major award nominations specifically for 'The Great Race,' but the film itself was nominated for several Academy Awards.

How did 'The Great Race' impact Natalie Wood's acting career?

'The Great Race' helped solidify Natalie Wood's reputation as a versatile actress capable of performing in comedy, adding to her established dramatic roles.

Is 'The Great Race' considered a classic film featuring Natalie Wood?

Yes, 'The Great Race' is considered a classic comedy film, and Natalie Wood's role is often remembered as one of her notable performances.

Additional Resources

1. *Natalie Wood: A Star in The Great Race*

This biography delves into Natalie Wood's impressive career, focusing on her role in the classic comedy film *The Great Race*. It explores her early life, rise to fame, and the challenges she faced in Hollywood. The book highlights how her performance in *The Great Race* showcased her comedic timing and charm, solidifying her status as a beloved actress of the era.

2. *The Great Race: Behind the Scenes with Natalie Wood*

Offering a detailed look at the making of *The Great Race*, this book features interviews, production notes, and anecdotes from cast and crew members. It emphasizes Natalie Wood's contribution to the film's success and her experiences working alongside legendary actors. Readers gain insight into the film's comedic elements and Wood's role in bringing them to life.

3. *Natalie Wood's Hollywood: From Child Star to The Great Race*

This comprehensive study traces Natalie Wood's transformation from a child actress to a leading lady in Hollywood comedies like *The Great Race*. The narrative explores her evolving acting style and the significance of her role in this iconic film. It also touches on her personal life and how it influenced her performances.

4. *The Comedy of The Great Race: Natalie Wood's Iconic Role*

Focusing on the comedic aspects of *The Great Race*, this book analyzes Natalie Wood's portrayal of Maggie DuBois, a spirited journalist. It discusses the film's humor, timing, and how Wood's performance contributed to its enduring popularity. The book also compares her role to other comedic female leads of the 1960s.

5. *Natalie Wood and The Great Race: A Cinematic Journey*

This volume explores the artistic and cinematic elements of *The Great Race*, with a special emphasis on Natalie Wood's character development. It examines the film's direction, screenplay, and how Wood's charm and wit brought depth to the story. The book includes rare photographs and film stills.

6. *Legendary Ladies of 1960s Cinema: Natalie Wood in The Great Race*

Highlighting notable actresses of the 1960s, this book features a dedicated chapter on

Natalie Wood and her role in **The Great Race**. It contextualizes her performance within the decade's film industry trends and female representation. The book celebrates Wood's influence and legacy in classic American cinema.

7. Natalie Wood: The Great Race and Beyond

This biography not only covers Natalie Wood's involvement in **The Great Race** but also explores her subsequent film projects and career trajectory. It discusses how the film impacted her public image and opened doors to diverse roles. The narrative provides a well-rounded portrait of Wood as both an actress and a cultural icon.

8. The Making of The Great Race: Natalie Wood's Unforgettable Performance

A behind-the-scenes account that details the production challenges and triumphs of **The Great Race**, focusing heavily on Natalie Wood's role. The book includes director's notes, cast interviews, and commentary on Wood's dedication to her craft. It gives readers an appreciation of the teamwork behind this classic comedy.

9. Hollywood's Golden Comedies: Featuring Natalie Wood in The Great Race

This collection celebrates the golden age of Hollywood comedies, with a spotlight on **The Great Race** and Natalie Wood's memorable performance. It analyzes the film's humor, style, and cultural impact during the 1960s. The book also places Wood's role within the broader context of comedic cinema history.

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