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THE  TIMES**Magali Noel**

Noel scandalised France in 1956 with a song with sadomasochistic lyrics Getty Images

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French actress who was muse to Federico Fellini

A French singer and actress who became a sex symbol, Magali Noël was the muse of the Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini.

In his semi-autobiographical film *Amarcord*, which was set in a small Italian town in the 1930s, she played Gradisca — “the town lay and schoolboys’ dream,” wrote The Times critic. In one of Fellini’s fantasy sequences she bit her pearl necklace as she attempted to seduce a fascist officer and then climbed into bed still wearing a red beret. The film won an Oscar for best foreign language film.

She also appeared in *La Dolce Vita* (1960), playing a chorus girl, and in *Satyricon* (1969), as Trimalchio’s wife Fortunata. It was during the shooting of these films that the director and actress developed a lifelong friendship. “One night Fellini called me at half past two in the morning. He wanted me go to Cinecittà [a studio in Rome] to shoot his film at ten that morning. I could not refuse and I went for it,” she said of being cast in *Amarcord* (1973).

The relationship was often playful; they had a snowball fight on one wintry set.

Magali Noëlle Guiffray was born in what is now Izmir, Turkey, in 1931 to French parents in the diplomatic corps. She studied music, dance and acting and got her break singing cabaret at the age of 16. She then began getting roles in French and Italian films. As a curvy brunette with strong features, she was considered to be France’s answer to Sophia Loren. She appeared in nearly 100 films, but it was her association with Fellini that stood out.

He acted as witness at Noël’s wedding to the Swiss music producer Jean-Claude Vial in 1976. She later had a daughter, Stephanie Vial-Noël, with the actor Jean-Pierre Bernard. Stephanie described her mother as the “muse of Federico”, adding: “Platonic or not at the start, I do not know. Federico called any time of day or night. He was like another dad for me.”

She scandalised France in 1956 with a rendition of the song “Fais-moi mal, Johnny” (“Hurt me, Johnny”). Its sadomasochistic

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lyrics, written by the poet Boris Vian, were criticised by the Vatican and censored on French radio stations. Noël was unfazed. “The title was banned everywhere, on the radio, on TV. So sometimes I would cheat and change the lyrics,” she said of performing the hit live. Today, it is celebrated as one of France’s first rock songs.

Magali Noël, actress and singer, was born on June 27, 1931. She died on June 23, 2015, aged 83

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Amarcord, a wonderful movie. Grazie.

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