

J. JEROME HILL
1905 - 1972

In determining the philanthropic program of the Jerome Foundation, the Directors have been guided by the artistic interests and humanistic concerns evidenced in the life of the Foundation's founder.

Jerome Hill, the grandson of railroad builder James Jerome Hill and the son of Louis W. Hill, Sr., was born and grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota. Manifesting an early interest in painting and drawing, Hill attended St. Paul Academy where, as a student, he decorated the walls of the chemistry laboratory with a series of historical murals which survive to this day. At Yale, where he majored in music, he created costumes and sets for the *Dramat* and drew for the *Record*. He studied painting at the British Academy in Rome and at the Academie Scandinav in Paris. His paintings and drawings have been widely exhibited and are included in several private and public collections.



During the 1930s in Cassis, where he went every summer to paint, Hill developed his interest in filmmaking. Using one of the first Cine-Kodak-Specials, he created a series of films experimenting with the language of cinema. After returning to the United States in 1939, he made two film shorts released by Warner Brothers.

Jerome Hill was also interested in still photography. Influenced by what he had learned as a student of Edward Weston, he undertook a photographic essay of a tour of Greece. This collection of stills was published in 1937 under the title *Trip To Greece*.

After World War II, during which he served in Army film units and as a liaison officer with French forces, Jerome Hill returned to film biographies. With Erika Anderson as cinematographer, he produced and directed a film short, *Grandma Moses* which was nominated for an Academy Award, and a feature length documentary, *Albert Schweitzer*, that received an Oscar in 1957. Dissatisfied with the narrow confines of documentaries, Hill made his first "story" film, *The Sandcastle* in 1959-60. Inspired by the ideas of C. G. Jung, it was a feature length, low-budget, comedy-fantasy in black and white with a dream sequence in color that introduced a novel form of stop animation.

Subsequent films included the full-length *Open The Door* also related to Jung's thoughts; *Schweitzer and Bach*, and hand-painted animation shorts: *Anticorrida*, *Merry Christmas*, *The Artist's Friends* and *The Canaries*. His full-length autobiographical film, *Film Portrait*, was selected as an outstanding Film of the Year for presentation at the 1972 London Film Festival and won the Gold Dukat Prize at the 21st Annual Film Festival in Mannheim.

In the late 1960s, Hill began to compose all of the scores for his films. Throughout his life an avid student and creator of music, his interest in later years was in composition of works for the harpsichord and small orchestra.

Jerome Hill's support of artistic and humanistic endeavors is known on both continents. Through the years he gave financial assistance which enabled numerous artists and humanists to continue their work. In 1964, he set aside funds to establish the Avon Foundation, which since 1973 has been known as the Jerome Foundation.