

G O D A R D ' S

MASCULINE FEMININE

RIALTO PICTURES PRESS BOOK

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Director
Jean-Luc Godard

Screenplay
Jean-Luc Godard

Based on “La Femme de Paul” and “Le Signe” by
Guy de Maupassant¹

Producer
Anatole Dauman

Cinematography
Willy Kurant

Editor
Agnès Guillemot

Songs
Jean-Jacques Debout

English subtitles (2004)
Lenny Borger

Pop song translations (2004)
Bruce Goldstein

A French-Swedish co-production

**Produced by Anouchka Films – Argos Films (Paris)
Svensk Filmindustri – Sandrews (Stockholm)**²

**A RIALTO PICTURES RELEASE
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**France, 1966 running time: 103 min.
aspect ratio: 1.33:1 In French with English subtitles**

¹ Upon seeing the film, the rightsholders of de Maupassant’s works decided the film bore no resemblance to the stories and gave the producer credit for a future project

² One year later, Sandrews would push the envelope of sexual frankness in the cinema even further by producing Vilgot Sjöman’s controversial *I Am Curious (Yellow)*.

CAST

Paul
Jean-Pierre Léaud

Madeleine
Chantal Goya

Elizabeth
Marlène Jobert

Robert
Michel Debord

Catherine-Isabelle
Catherine-Isabelle Duport

Herself
Brigitte Bardot

Himself (Man with Bardot)
Antoine Bourseiller

Woman with American Officer
Françoise Hardy

Man in the Movie
Birger Malmsten

Woman in the Movie
Eva-Britt Strandberg

“Miss 19”
Elsa Leroy

Record Producer
Mickey Baker

Man in the Métro
Med Hondo

Woman in the Métro
Chantal Darget

PAULINE KAEI ON “MASCULINE FEMININE”

Masculine Feminine is that rare movie achievement: a work of grace and beauty in a contemporary setting. Using neither crime nor the romance of crime but a simple romance for a kind of interwoven story line, Godard has, at last, created the form he needed... essay, journalistic sketches, portraiture, love lyric and satire.

The boy, a pop revolutionary (Jean-Pierre Léaud), is full of doubts and questions. The girl (Chantal Goya) is a *yé yé*³ singer with a thin, reedy little voice; her face is haunting just because it's so empty — she seems alive only when she's looking in the mirror toying with her hair.

Godard asks questions of youth and sketches a portrait in a series of question-answer episodes that are the dramatic substance of the movie... There are informal boy-to-boy conversations about women and politics; there is a phenomenal six-minute single-take parody-interview with a “Miss Nineteen,” who might be talking while posing for the cover of *Glamour*; and there are two boy-girl sessions which define the contemporary meaning of masculine and feminine.

... Godard captures the awkwardnesses that reveal the pauses, the pretensions, the mannerisms — the rhythms of the dance — as no one has before... He gets the little things that people who have to follow scripts can't get: the differences in the way girls are with each other and with boys, and boys with each other and with girls. Not just what they do, but how they smile and look away.

There's life in *Masculine Feminine*, which shows the most dazzlingly inventive and audacious artist in movies today at a new peak.

-- excerpted from *The New Republic*, November 19, 1966⁴

AWARDS

**JEAN-PIERRE LEAUD
BEST ACTOR (SILVER BEAR), BERLIN FILM FESTIVAL**

**YOUTH AWARD – BEST FILM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
– BERLIN FILM FESTIVAL⁵**

³ slang for French pop music: see footnote 26.

⁴ Kael's review of *Masculine Feminine* for *The New Republic* convinced *New Yorker* editor William Shawn to hire her. “Godard was one of the reasons he hired me,” Kael once commented. “Shawn rarely sat through a movie, [but] he realized that there was something to Godard. And I had been writing very lovingly about Godard.”

⁵ Ironically, in France, the film was prohibited to persons under 18 -- “the very audience it was intended for,” griped Godard.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Paul (Jean-Pierre Léaud), a romantic young idealist, completes his military service and meets aspiring pop singer Madeleine (Chantal Goya). Despite markedly different musical tastes (he's into Bach) and political leanings (he's a Communist; she's clueless), the two soon become romantically involved and Paul moves in with Madeleine and her two roommates, Eliizabeth and Catherine (Marlène Jobert and Catherine-Isabelle Duport). Working as an opinion pollster, Paul meditates on his generation's place in the shifting world of 1960's Paris. Meanwhile, Madeleine pursues her musical career, striving for a Top 40 hit. But Paul's quest for social and emotional fulfillment becomes more and more problematic as his relationship with Madeleine grows increasingly dysfunctional. Political debates ensue, and the couple encounters a series of bizarre individuals who plunge Paul into further confusion and isolation.

SYNOPSIS IN 15 PRECISE CHAPTERS

Notes and annotations by Bruce Goldstein and Hyoe Yamamoto

1 Paul (Jean-Pierre Léaud) sits at a café, reciting a poem he is composing on the spot. Paul spots Madeleine (Chantal Goya) and starts talking to her. Paul explains that he's just ended his mandatory sixteen months of army duty and needs a job. Madeleine promises to put in a good word for him at a magazine. Madeleine used to work at the magazine, but is now pursuing a career as a pop singer. A man and woman in the café have a heated argument. The woman takes a gun out of her purse and shoots the man in the back.

2 In another café, Paul meets Robert (Michel Debord), a factory worker on strike. He asks Paul to sign a petition to release political prisoners in Brazil⁶. Paul tells Robert that he needs a place to live. Robert asks him if he's been seeing Madeleine, but Paul pretends that he's not interested in her. "Not getting laid then?" replies Robert.

3 Madeleine is back working at the magazine, along with Catherine (Catherine-Isabelle Duport) and Paul. "The average French girl does not exist," Catherine says in a voice-over. Paul follows Madeleine to the rest rooms to ask her to go out with him. She asks if "going out" means "sleep with me." After some hedging, he blurts out that he wants to go to bed with her. The two grill each other on love and sex. Madeleine asks Paul what the center of the world is. Paul answers "love." "I would have said 'me'," admits Madeleine.

⁶ A political militant himself, Léaud in 1968 made a speech to hundreds of students at Brasilia University, in opposition to Brazil's military dictatorship.

4 Paul and Robert, carrying paint cans and a briefcase, are seen with Madeleine, Catherine, and Elizabeth (Marlène Jobert). Paul's narration calls it "the era of James Bond and Vietnam" and says how hope is sweeping the French left with the approaching December election⁷. He notes that Robert likes Catherine, who "is probably still a virgin but has the makings of a militant." Paul and Robert spot an American officer with a pretty blonde woman (Françoise Hardy)⁸. While Paul chats with the officer's chauffeur, Robert paints "PEACE IN VIETNAM" on the side of the car. The two yell "U.S. out of Vietnam!" as the car drives away.

Madeleine describes her developing relationship with Paul in a voice-over. RCA⁹ is releasing her first single in a few days; she hopes it's a hit so that she can buy a Morris Cooper. She explains that Elizabeth is jealous of her relationship with Paul and that she may let Paul sleep with her, as long as he doesn't become a pest.

On the Métro, Paul and Robert observe two black men and a white woman. One of the men indignantly explains that whites have no real understanding of the rage behind Charlie Parker, Bessie Smith and other black artists. The woman pulls a gun out and shoots him¹⁰.

Catherine and Elizabeth discuss sex in their bathroom. Catherine talks about the importance of physical pleasure, but Elizabeth stresses "the look" and emotions.

5 Paul finally tells Madeleine that he wants to marry her, but the impatient Madeleine, preoccupied with the release of her single, asks to discuss it later. Chantal Goya's "Laisse Moi" ("Leave Me Alone") is heard on the soundtrack.

6 Paul, Madeleine, and Elizabeth go out to a discothèque, where couples dance to "Laisse Moi." At a snack bar, Elizabeth rhapsodizes over the singer Sandie Shaw¹¹, but Paul says her music him sick. Insulted, Elizabeth and Madeleine leave him. A blonde girl asks him to take a picture with her in a photo

⁷ See 1965: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, pages 20 and 21

⁸ Hardy was France's most popular pop singer since Brigitte Bardot. She became a sensation in 1962 with the hit single, *Tous Les Garçons et Les Filles*.

⁹ RCA was Goya's actual label. Her six pop songs from *Masculine Feminine*, all written by her future husband/manager Jean-Jacques Debout, were released in France as an extended play (EP) 45 rpm record. (This record was reissued on a Japanese CD in 2004.)

¹⁰ This scene was freely adapted from Leroi Jones' play *Dutchman*, which was filmed the same year by director Anthony Harvey. The film starred Al Freeman Jr. and Shirley Clark.

¹¹ Sandie Shaw is a British pop singer whose career peaked in the mid-60s. She recently collaborated with Morrissey and The Smiths.

booth and offers to let him touch her breasts for 150 francs. Disgruntled, Paul walks into a recording booth and records an impromptu, stream-of-consciousness love message for Madeleine. Goya's "Tu m'a trop menti" ("You've Lied Too Much to Me") plays on the soundtrack as he walks into a games arcade. A man pulls a knife on him but instead stabs himself, falling into Paul's arms.

7 In a laundromat, Paul tells Robert that his landlord is kicking him out and that he hopes to move in with Madeleine. Robert reads aloud from a newspaper article about Bob Dylan, whom Paul hasn't yet heard of. They joke about Dylan and "O! Yes!" bras¹². Paul admits being sad about Madeleine. Robert asks if he ever noticed that the word "masculine" contained the words "mask" and "ass."¹³ Paul asks what "feminine" contains. "Nothing," says Robert.

In a voice-over, Catherine tells of a new discovery – the transmitting of thoughts by injection -- and predicts that in 20 years everyone will be equipped with a device giving them an instant orgasm. Robert, Elizabeth, and Madeleine each take a turn describing how consumerism will soon dominate human existence.

8 In the girls' flat, Catherine tells Paul that Madeleine's worried about getting pregnant, but Paul insists he's old enough to know not to go all the way. Catherine says that she herself uses a diaphragm. Madeleine comes home and announces that her record "Pinball Champ" is number six in Japan¹⁴. Paul ridicules Madeleine by spouting fan-magazine-type nonsense about her. She tells him to stop making fun of her, but Paul shows that he's quoting directly from *France Soir*¹⁵.

Paul eavesdrops, through a frosted window, on Madeleine and Elizabeth taking a shower together. Catherine catches him with his hand in his pants. He pretends to be catching a flea.

Paul, Madeleine and Elizabeth go to sleep together. The three have a bedtime debate about the proper word for *derrière*. As Paul and Madeleine snuggle, he asks if he can touch her. She sleepily says yes, but tells him to "be gentle."¹⁶

¹² An actual brand. As a woman walks by, they shout out its slogan: "O! Yes! What pretty breasts!"

¹³ In French "masque" and "cul." It works in both languages.

¹⁴ Goya's *Si Tu Gagnes au Flipper* ("If You Win at Pinball," aka "Pinball Champ") actually hit number 6 on the Japanese charts that year.

¹⁵ In this scene, Catherine sings a song from Truffaut's *Jules and Jim*, and Paul recites lines ("I have no old mother!") from Renoir's *The Rules of the Game*.

¹⁶ "Sois gentil," the title of one of the Goya hits on the soundtrack

Paul walks into the kitchen, where Catherine is playing with a miniature guillotine. As the voice of André Malraux¹⁷ is heard on the soundtrack, Catherine raises the blade and lets it fall.

9 Paul interviews “Miss 19” (Elsa Leroy).¹⁸ She is completely ignorant of politics and embarrassed by his questions about birth control. This chapter is entitled DIALOGUE WITH A CONSUMER PRODUCT.

10 Paul plays pinball in a café, as “Pinball Champ” plays on the jukebox. Sitting down for a meal with Elizabeth, Paul tells a story of how his father discovered that the earth revolves around the sun while eating mashed potatoes. Paul says that Madeleine’s pregnant, but Elizabeth thinks she’s putting him on. At another table, Brigitte Bardot¹⁹ and actor/director Antoine Bourseiller go over lines from Jean Vauthier’s 1958 play “Les prodiges.”

11 Paul and the three girls go to see an erotic Swedish film²⁰ (intermission music: Goya’s “Comment le revoir”). Just as things start getting hot on-screen, Paul jumps up, complaining that the film is being shown in the wrong aspect ratio. He dashes to the projection room and delivers a lecture to the projectionist. Bored, Paul and Elizabeth want to leave, but Catherine and Madeleine insist on staying. Paul says in a voice-over that the movie was disappointing and made him sad, because “it wasn’t that total film we carried inside ourselves.”

12 Robert insists Catherine is in love with Paul. She denies it and says it’s none of his business. He gives her the third degree about her sex life. She in turn grills him on his own predilections. Goya’s “Sois gentil” (“Be gentle”) is heard in the background. An intertitle coins Godard’s most famous quotation:

THIS FILM COULD BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF MARX AND COCA-COLA

¹⁷ One of the most famous French novelists of the 20th century (*Man’s Fate*, etc.) and a hero of the French forces during WWII, André Malraux (1901-1976) was appointed Minister of Information by DeGaulle following the war. He was made Minister of Cultural Affairs in 1960 and in 1968 would achieve infamy in film circles for deposing Henri Langlois as head of the Cinémathèque Française, a move reviled by Godard, Truffaut, et al.

¹⁸ Leroy was the real-life “Mademoiselle Age Tendre” (Miss Tender Age) for 1965

¹⁹ Three years before, Bardot had starred in Godard’s *Contempt*.

²⁰ The film-within-the-film is a remake of Godard’s own 1955 short *Une femme coquette*, (based on de Maupassant’s *Le Signe*), which starred Godard as the man. In *Masculine Feminine*, the man is played by Birger Malmstem, star of Ingmar Bergman’s earliest films.

13 A man asks Paul for a match and walks away. Paul follows him off-screen. He comes back to report that the man has set himself on fire in front of the American hospital. A disbelieving Madeleine walks off-screen and comes back to confirm that the man really did set himself on fire²¹.

14 Catherine and Paul visit Madeleine at a studio²², where she's recording her second single, "D'abord, dis-mois ton nom" ("First tell me your name"). Madeleine is interviewed for a radio program outside the studio. She's asked if she belongs to the Pepsi Generation²³, among other completely trivial questions. Paul claims to have stolen a car, but Madeleine points out that he's "no Pierrot Le Fou."²⁴

Against shots of everyday working class Paris life, Paul's narration tells about his work as an opinion pollster, in which he asks the average person in the street questions ranging from "Why are society women more frigid than factory girls" to "Did you know there's an Iraqi-Kurd war on?"

15 At a police station, Catherine explains the circumstances by which Paul fell out of a window in his new high-rise apartment. She says it wasn't a suicide, but a stupid accident. Madeleine is asked what she's going to do with her unborn child. She says she's not sure. Elizabeth had suggested using a curtain rod to abort the baby, but Madeleine is still not sure.

The word **FEMININ** appears on screen...five middle letters disappear to spell

FIN

²¹ In November 1965, Quaker Norman Morrison immolated himself in front of The Pentagon in protest of the war in Vietnam. A week later, 22-year-old Roger Allen LaPorte set himself on fire in front of the UN building in New York. Earlier in the year, two other Quakers had protested in the same fashion.

²² Goya's producer in this scene is Mickey Baker, a legendary R&B guitarist who, with Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley, is considered a major figure in the move from R&B to rock.

²³ In 1963, Pepsi-Cola began a media blitz with a campaign targeted directly at the consumer-oriented post-war baby boomers. "Come Alive! You're in the Pepsi Generation!" made advertising history. As one advertising website points out, it was "the first time a product is identified, not so much by its attributes, as by its consumers' lifestyles and attitudes."

²⁴ Godard's *Pierrot Le Fou*, was released in November 1965, the month shooting began on *Masculine Feminine*, so Godard is in effect plugging his latest film. In the same scene, Paul makes up the name "General Doinel," a reference to Antoine Doinel, the character Léaud made famous in Truffaut's films.

ON THE SET OF “MASCULINE FEMININE”

excerpted from “One Evening, in a Small Café” by Phillippe Labro

When I arrive at the little café on Boulevard *Edgar Quinet*, the film crew is already there. There aren't a whole lot of them: sitting in a corner, very inconspicuously, is Jean-Pierre Léaud, looking thinner and more lost in thought than the last time I saw him. Someone introduces me to Godard (faded raincoat, a tired look about him, going bald, smoking a king-size cigarette with yellow paper, a voice that is soft and tense at the same time, strong bony hands). He is very pleasant, very polite.

“Sure it doesn't bother you if I watch you work?”

“Not at all.” (Before that, he said “How do you do.”)

“If you have dirty shirts you need washed, here's your chance; we're filming in the laundromat next door.”

He films many scenes in cafés like this one. They are never very attractive, never “picturesque,” they're ordinary bistros with neon, a jukebox in a corner, benches, a bar; this is his vision of our world. He films in black and white, for a normal sized screen. The film will cost no more than sixty million old francs, a paltry sum.

He's the only one who really knows what's going on at all times; the only thing the rest of the crew has as a guide, as a sort of work plan, is a thin notebook of a dozen pages or so, divided into what they call “work sequences” (there are thirteen of them), but when the real shooting starts, Jean-Luc Godard gets out his sketchbook (an 8”x12” spiral notebook with a blue cover). The dialogue and the scene directions are recorded in it in his handwriting (dark blue ink, lines close together, without too many things crossed out). He has his actors and actresses read these over once or twice; “he has the whole film in his head,” they say.

The minute he begins working, it is crystal clear, blindingly clear, strikingly clear that nothing else counts, that his supposed “nervousness on the set” is really only extraordinary concentration, that this man knows exactly, to the foot almost, to the second almost, to the interjection almost, what he wants, and that as long as he doesn't get it, he will not for a second relax this passionately intense, electric atmosphere that he creates around his little world, nor will his mottled face lose for a single second its icy, desperate expression (for that matter, does he ever lose it? Godard wears a mask that resembles his films: it is desperate), nor will his voice lose its monotonous, thin, metallic, not really cold, but a little nasty, tone, a tone that in the end is fascinating, for at the same time it is a tone of intelligent authoritativeness.

Godard speaks to his actor:

“Let’s start over; pay a little attention now. What is it you can say? If you can’t say it, don’t say it. You are absolutely not thinking, not for a second, about what you’re saying. You lighted your cigarette; I didn’t tell you to do that in this shot. You can’t do just any old thing, just because we film the way amateurs do!”

These last words (the key words) are pronounced with one of the rare smiles (half sardonic, half affectionate) of the long evening. Then, seeing that Léaud is still chagrined because he didn’t do the right thing, he says, kindly and calmly:

“Don’t think of anything, don’t think of anything, do as I do. Keep your head empty. It’s the secret of being relaxed.”

And with this, suddenly and at long last, Godard’s text, pronounced with that terribly false tone that people have when they’re speaking (and which is bound to make the scene ring true when you see it in your theater seat), comes out:

“You’ve got to throw yourself into the struggle, and by being in it, you end up learning. You put up with too much. That’s impossible...”

At two o’clock in the morning, Godard grinds out his tenth or twelfth yellow cigarette butt underfoot, puts his raincoat on, and says to the whole film crew:

“Come on, we’re through.”

He shakes one or two hands, but that is all, and starts off, his notebook under his arm. We make our way, through a Montparnasse that is sound asleep, to the “Rosebud,” where we are going to drink beer and have some hot beans. As we’re sitting around the table, I ask Godard a few questions:

“Is your film a sequel to *Pierrot Le Fou*? That was a film full of despair.”

“Yes, this one won’t be very gay either.”

“*Pierrot* was a big commercial success.”

“Yes, but it was a show, there was something of a show about it; this one won’t be like that at all, it’ll be an anti-show. With *Pierrot*, people felt things; they didn’t understand, but they felt something. They said: ‘Well, he’s putting on a show.’ It was an emotional subject, there was nothing reflective about it. There won’t be in *Masculine Feminine* either, but it will be a film between one reflection and another. There are times when you don’t necessarily need a baby, but it so happens you have one anyway. It’s there, it exists, it would perhaps be better if it had come along at some other time. But when it’s there, you dress it in whatever’s at hand. That’s what this film is. Moreover, I think I’m going to change the title; I’m going to call it *Masculine Feminine Junior*.”

“Could it be said, then, that it’s a film ‘about young people’?”

“Yes and no. It’s about things that young people say. It’s about people, not about a world. I think that young people have a completely different world that we don’t know about. If you ask Chantal Goya what the Popular Front²⁵ is, it has no meaning for her; she doubtless knows what it is, but it doesn’t mean anything. A five-year-old child knows what a satellite is, there’s nothing magic about it any more, and there is therefore a completely different way of thinking. I would like people to find this feeling in it; it’s a film on the idea of youth. But when you say youth, it’s not necessarily a matter of kicking up your heels. I’m thirty-five and I still consider myself somebody who’s young, so the ones who are eighteen have a totally different world. Chantal Goya, for instance: I was looking for somebody and I was very happy to come across her. She’s great. She’s the “Pepsi Generation.”

“Is she a good singer?”

“She’s number six in Japan. But she jokes about it. It’s a funny world – these very young people who earn money and have maids and secretaries their own age. Records are marvelous – they’re better than writing a book or making a film. It’s easier, they often don’t even know how to sing, it’s a quick way to earn money.”

“Is this mixing of Vietnam and the *yé yé*²⁶ generation a deliberate thing?”

“Of course – or at least it’s true that Bob Dylan is a link between the *yé yé* kids and politics, a way to bring the two together. But, you know, I think it was Baudelaire who said that it was on the toilet walls that you see the human soul: you see graffiti there – politics and sex. Well, that’s what my film is.”

“Is it as autobiographical as *Pierrot*? Or, for that matter, was *Pierrot* autobiographical?”

“*Pierrot le fou* wasn’t really autobiographical. I think it was Truffaut who said – and the same thing goes for my films – that in his films there was 20 per cent autobiography, 20 per cent things you’ve read, 20 per cent things you’ve heard, or been told, 20 per cent fiction, and 20 per cent something else I don’t remember.”

“And what are you shooting tomorrow?”

²⁵ The Popular Front was a coalition of left-wing political parties in Spain, created in the 1930s to gain political strength against Franco’s Fascists.

²⁶ “*Yé yé*” (derived from English pop’s “yeah, yeah, yeah”) is slang for French pop music. The king of *yé yé* was (and perhaps still is) Johnny Hallyday, the country’s answer to Elvis Presley. The years 1962 to 1966 saw an explosion of *yé yé* girl singers including Françoise Hardy, Sheila, France Gall, Chantal Goya, and any number of one-hit wonders.

“We’re filming a scene in the Métro, where it goes above ground. Léaud goes up there with his friend because between two stations the train passes by the window of girls he knows; so they’re going to try to see the girls getting undressed; but the train goes by so fast that they miss out. Then they witness a sort of argument between a Negro and a girl. It isn’t written yet. I’ll write it tomorrow.”

GODARD ON “MASCULINE FEMININE”
Excerpted from an interview with Pierre Daix
Originally published in *Les Lettres Françaises* (June 1966)

Would you say Masculine Feminine is film about youth?

GODARD: No, it’s more a film on the idea of youth. A philosophical idea, but not a practical one – a way of reacting to things. It’s not a dissertation on youth or even an analysis. Let’s say that it speaks of youth, but it’s a piece of music, a “concerto of youth.” I have taken young signs, signs that have not yet been deformed. My signs haven’t already been used a thousand times. I can talk about them now, afterward, because when I made this film, I didn’t have the least idea of what I wanted.

One gets the feeling that you started with a band of young people, and that as you went along you conducted the surveys, letting yourself be more or less guided by them.

That’s true. The film was a way for me to approach them.

To approach them as someone who is older than they are?

I think that I’m as young as they are. I noticed that I was both older and younger than they were.

What’s most striking to me was that this is a film not about youth, the way that films on the same subject by Carné or De Sica are; it’s a film with youth.

True. At the same time I chose young people because I no longer have any idea where I am from the point of view of cinema. I am in search of cinema. It seems to me that I have lost it. Talking with young people was an easier way to find myself than talking with adults. I have the impression that, if a person is young, he must give of himself, and he does so willingly, without ulterior motives, and if he gives himself away, he’s not unhappy. For me these were people who had not been conditioned. Conditioned by their life, certainly, but not morally conditioned. Even when they react badly, or when they don’t want to come right out and say something, there’s a certain spontaneity, a certain innocence. I wanted to use cinema to speak of youth, or else I wanted to use youth to speak of cinema.

Have you had any reactions to your film from young people, outside of those who have worked in it?

No. Since the film is prohibited to people under eighteen, I have no idea whether it interests them. I think there should be a good twenty films like it, from different backgrounds – in the provinces, in the North, in the South. Films that television ought to do but doesn't, because television only fills up a schedule. Which are often hours well spent, but are not genuine works. They don't think like painters or novelists; they forget works of imagination. And works of imagination are nonetheless what lie closest to people's hearts.

I believe that if young people could see it – young people the same age as Léaud – the film would go on in their heads after the movie had ended.

The three or four young people who played in it could have experienced what went on in the film rather than something else. There is no difference between what they did during the day and what they represented in the film; it was exactly the same.

You disturb the traditional relationship between the director and his actors.

I'm sure of one thing, that this is what cinema means to me, and that this is what it has never been; it went off track immediately. When Lumière first invented cinema, the last thing he had in mind was a spectacle. One day a guy said to him, "Come show your gimmick in my neighborhood and we'll make people pay." But Lumière was an artist, not a showman. I know very well that cinema is a sort of industry, one that's got to make a profit and that's part show business. But in my work there's always a part that's not a show at all and yet it comes through quite nicely, like an informal lecture, or a course at the Sorbonne, or a concert. The theater is pure show; it's magnificent. Cinema – a film by Jacques Demy or [Max Ophüls'] *Lola Montes* – can be pure spectacle. Other films are both, and still others that have absolutely nothing to do with this. They can be bad – that's another question entirely – but they're searching for something.

Do you think cinema as an art is in good health?

From the point of view of images and sound alone, I think cinema is in better health than ever. People need it, above all in France where the population is getting younger. It's young people who go to the movies, and they haven't found their films, their television shows. They've found their music, but they haven't really found the image that goes with it.

JEAN-LUC GODARD (Director/Writer)

Born December 3, 1930 in Paris, the son of a doctor and a banker's daughter, Godard had his elementary and high school education in Switzerland and in Paris, then enrolled at the Sorbonne, ostensibly to study ethnology. During his university days he developed a passionate devotion to the cinema, spending endless hours at Left Bank cinema clubs and at the Cinémathèque Française, where in 1950 he met the critic André Bazin and future filmmakers François Truffaut, Jacques Rivette, Eric Rohmer, and Claude Chabrol, with whom he would later form the nucleus of the French New Wave. Godard began contributing articles and film criticism for *La Gazette du Cinéma*, then *Cahiers du Cinéma*.

In 1951, Godard toured North and South America. Supporting himself with a variety of odd jobs, he continued watching films at a fanatical rate, and his articles for *Cahiers* began reflecting an enthusiastic admiration for little-known American directors of action films and at the same time a deep contempt for the traditional cinema, especially the commercial French film.

In 1954, Godard returned to Switzerland and remained there to work as a laborer on a dam project. With his earnings he bought himself a 35mm camera and made his first film, *Opération Beton*, a 20-minute short about the construction of the dam.

Following four more shorts, Godard stunned the world with his first feature film, *Breathless*, released early in 1960. The film marked a significant break from orthodox cinema techniques, reshaping the traditional film syntax with its astonishing jump cuts and unsteady hand-held moving shots. It was a spontaneous, impulsive, vibrant, and totally original film that reflected the director's enchantment with the immediacy of the American gangster movie and his impatience with the laboriousness of the traditional techniques of "quality" cinema. It immediately established Godard as a leading spokesman of the Nouvelle Vague.

Godard's next film, *Le Petit Soldat*, was a savage exposition of the Algerian conflict and also the first of seven features to star his future wife Anna Karina. Karina next played a stripper in his *A Woman Is a Woman* (1961, re-released by Rialto Pictures in 2003) and a Paris prostitute in *My Life to Live* (1962). *Les Carabiniers* (1963) was an anti-war allegory that provoked violently hostile reaction from audiences. Its grainy dreariness stood in sharp contrast to the wide-screen color cinematography of *Contempt* (1963, re-released by Rialto & Strand Releasing in 1997), which starred Brigitte Bardot and Michel Piccoli.

With *Band of Outsiders* (1964, re-released by Rialto Pictures in 2001), Godard returned to the world of the gangster. *A Married Woman* (1964) was the study of an alienated Parisian woman. *Alphaville* (1965), Godard's only excursion into science fiction, was followed in the same year by *Pierrot le Fou*.

Godard's impact on the cinema of the 60s was monumental and sweeping. He used the camera inventively, re-writing the syntax of films along the way. *Masculine Feminine* (1966) was a free-form study of the mores of Parisian youth. *Made in USA* (1966) was based on an American potboiler. *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967) told the story of a Paris housewife who moonlights as a prostitute. *La Chinoise* (1967) featured in the leading role actress Anne Wiazemsky, who became Godard's second wife.

After *Week End* (1968), a new Godard surfaced, a revolutionary, didactic filmmaker who became obsessed with the spoken word and increasingly apathetic to cinema as a visual medium. He dedicated himself to making "revolutionary films for revolutionary audiences."

In the late 70s Godard underwent yet another metamorphosis, rediscovering himself and his love of film. He refocused his sights on themes of universal humanistic concern in *Every Man for Himself* (1980), *Passion* (1982), and *First Name: Carmen* (1983). He even paid a renewed homage to American cinema in *Détective* (1985), but caused massive controversy with his *Hail Mary!* (1985).

King Lear (1987) was an unsuccessful attempt to film Shakespeare. *Soigne ta droite* (1987), *Nouvelle Vague* (1990) and *Hélas pour moi* (1994) all featured top stars, but his *For Ever Mozart* (1997), with its typically Godardian disquisition on art and war, was the best received of the four.

In 1998, Godard completed his long-gestating *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*, a highly personal meditation on 100 years of cinema, which was released on video and in book form. Other works of the 90s include *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, the self-portrait *JLG/JLG* (1995).

In 2003, he made *In Praise of Love*, a surprisingly moving study of art, history, madness and exploitation and, last year, *Notre Musique*, shot on location in Sarajevo. *Morceaux choisis* (literally, "choice bits"), a 90-minute re-edit of his *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*, was shown this winter at the Pompidou Center in Paris and was the opening night film of the re-opened Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Among his many prizes and honors, Godard won the best director award at the Berlin Festival for *Breathless*, a Berlin Jury Prize for *A Woman Is a Woman*, and Venice's Golden Lion (Best Film) for *First Name: Carmen*. In 1986, he was honored with a Special French César Award for lifetime achievement.

Adapted from Ephraim Katz's Film Encyclopedia; updated by Lenny Borger

JEAN-PIERRE LEAUD (Paul)

Born in Paris in 1944, Léaud's on-screen life was given birth in *The 400 Blows* (1959), as director François Truffaut's fictional alter ego Antoine Doinel. This film, which lingered in affectionate close-up on the face of the young actor, introduced a performative energy that was defiant, withdrawn, and, at the same time, fragile and exposed. It is for this role and the subsequent films in the Doinel cycle [*Antoine et Colette* (1962), *Stolen Kisses* (1968), *Bed and Board* (1970), *Love on the Run* (1979)] that Léaud remains best known²⁷. Doinel, the hapless romantic frustrated by modern life, has become one of the best-loved characters in French cinema.

During the same period, Léaud made a number of films with Jean-Luc Godard.²⁸ These roles were poles apart from Doinel but also exploit the outsider quality that is intrinsic to Léaud. However, where Léaud's performances for Truffaut were that of a lonely, romantic outsider, for Godard, Léaud was a dogmatic and often didactic idealist who also skirted the fringes of life. Truffaut described Léaud's Doinel persona as one who "does not openly oppose society (and in this sense is not a revolutionary), but he is wary of it and goes his own way, on the outskirts of society."²⁹ Godard, on the other hand, almost always had Léaud play a revolutionary or ideologue, and in many ways, this was closer to the truth of the performer. Truffaut biographers Antoine De Baecque and Serge Toubiana wrote:

Both directors used Jean-Pierre Léaud as an actor, but in opposite ways. Truffaut was often appalled or wounded by Léaud's personal choices and his commitment to left-wing militancy. The actor for his part surely felt closer to Godard, even though, on a human level, he remained extremely attached to Doinel's creator.³⁰

Regardless of the personal dynamics, both directors attached enormous importance to Léaud as a principal performer in the early stages of their careers. Léaud expressed a defining characteristic of both directors: like Doinel, like many

²⁸ *Masculine Feminine* was Léaud's first major role for the director. He also played leading roles in Godard's *Made in U.S.A.*, *La Chinoise*, *Week End*, *Grandeur et décadence* (made for French television), *Le Gai Savoir*, and *Détective*, along with cameos in *Pierrot Le Fou* and *Alphaville*.

²⁹ quoted from Truffaut's introduction to the collected Doinel screenplays (*The Adventures of Antoine Doinel*, Simon and Schuster, 1971)

³⁰ *Truffaut*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1999

of the Godard characters and like both directors, Léaud, Truffaut's biographers explain, "doesn't reject society; it is society that takes issue with his spirit and style of life." These men are all bound up in an energetic verve that is dulled by the constraints of society. Childlike: Truffaut in emotions and romance, Godard in anger and ideals, and Léaud in body and spirit.

Léaud won the Best Actor Award (Silver Bear) for his disarming performance in *Masculine Feminine*.

Excerpted from Because of Tenderness: Thoughts on the Performance of Jean-Pierre Léaud by Rhys Graham (collected in Senses of Cinema)

CHANTAL GOYA (Madeleine)

Born Chantal Deguerre in Saigon in 1946, Goya moved to Paris when she was four. At the behest of Jean-Jacques Debout, Goya auditioned at RCA Records for legendary R&B guitarist Mickey Baker. The audition was a success, and, in 1964, Goya's first single, *C'est bien Bernard*, propelled her into yé yé stardom³¹.

In 1966, while filming *Masculine Feminine*, she became pregnant with Debout's child, and the two married. The couple enjoyed an artistic partnership: Debout penned the majority of his wife's songs until Goya's yé yé period ended in 1967.

In the 1970s, Goya again became popular, this time for her work performing children's songs. The singer made a comeback in 1998 with the release of *Les Années 60*, an anthology of her 60's hits. In 2001, Goya re-appeared in the French Top 40 when her song *Becassine Is My Cousine* hit number 26 in the charts. The song was also released in rap and techno-remix versions.

The six Goya songs heard on the *Masculine Feminine* soundtrack (all written by husband Jean-Jacques Dubout) are "D'abord dis-moi ton nom," "Laisse-moi," "Si tu gagnes au flipper" (aka "Pinball Champ"), "Tu m'a trop menti," "Comment le revoir" and "Sois gentil" (words by Roger Dumas). An album of the soundtrack songs was released in France and reissued on CD in Japan in 2004.

WILLY KURANT (Cinematographer)

A leading cinematographer of the French New Wave, Kurant began his feature film career as DP on Agnes Varda's *Les Créatures*. He has shot films for Orson Welles, (*The Immortal Story*) Jerzy Skolimowski (*Le Départ*), Maurice Pialat (*Sous le Soleil de Satan*), among many others. Following *Masculine Feminine*, he shot the Godard sequence of *Far From Vietnam*.

³¹ see footnote 26

GOYA ON GODARD

Interview by Yves Salgues

GOYA: On November 7, I got a phone call from Daniel Filipacchi, the director of artists and repertory at RCA. Daniel said to me in his usual laconic way, “Godard’s going to call you. He saw your picture in the papers. He’s got a role he’s going to offer you. It’s made for you. Keep me posted. Bye.’ And Godard did get in touch with me, and told me to meet him at the Bar des Théâtres on Avenue Montaigne.

Were you scared?

I was more intrigued than scared. Godard arrived: glasses like some minor functionary’s, a dark beard, long hair, a worn raincoat and a gloomy look about him. He didn’t say much. “I don’t know anything about singing,” he said, “but I’m interested in working with you. If it interests you, if you like films, you’ll say yes. If not, there’s no use my insisting.” “I don’t know how to act. I’m not an actress,” I insisted. “That’s exactly it,” he answered, “that’s what I’m looking for: creatures who are neither film nor stage actress.”

You didn’t even think to have him tell you the plot of the film?

At that time, Godard didn’t have any precise idea of the scenario he’d be filming from. He spoke to me, very vaguely, of a story by Maupassant, “Paul’s Mistress,” that he was thinking of following, but not very close at all, and of my probable partner, Jean-Pierre Léaud. On the other hand, he had me talk to him for more than an hour: about what I liked, how I lived, what I’d read, what kind of music I admired, and so on. Then he asked me to show him some photos. He finally said good-bye and said “I’ll call you again in two weeks.”

He obviously kept his word.

Almost to the minute. “If you think it would be fun to make a film with me, I’ll send you a contract,” he said to me. “We begin next week.”

What happened when you had your baptism before the camera?

On the morning of November 22, I arrived at a café, at the Port des Lilas. I tried to find out where the make-up woman was: there wasn’t any. I was stupefied to find neither spots nor floodlights. They were filming with natural light: just the light of the café. That’s what the Godard style is all about... Jean-Pierre Léaud, whom I didn’t know from Adam -- or Eve -- came over to me and, looking me straight in the eye, asked me point blank, “Will you marry me?” I told him: “We’ll see later. I’m in a hurry. Bye.” I went home at noon. It was the end of the work day.

originally published in the French magazine 24 Heures

1965: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

JANUARY-FEBRUARY

- The first U.S. combat troops are sent to South Vietnam
- The James Bond mega-hit *Goldfinger* is released in France
- Malcolm X is assassinated in New York City by Black Muslims
- Production begins on The Beatles' second film, *Help!*

MARCH

- 3,500 U.S. Marines arrive in South Vietnam
- Bob Dylan releases *Bringing It All Back Home*, one of the pioneering albums of folk rock, featuring "Subterranean Homesick Blues" and "Mr. Tambourine Man"
- Cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov becomes the first person to walk in space
- *The Sound of Music* (1965) is released in the U.S. It would become the biggest box office hit of the 1960s.
- NASA launches Ranger 9, last of its unmanned lunar space probes.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. leads march from Selma to Montgomery

APRIL-JUNE

- Bob Dylan concludes a tour of Europe with the first of two concerts at London's Royal Albert Hall. The behind-the-scenes of the concert would be documented in D.A. Pennebaker's *Don't Look Back* (1967).
- Godard's *Alphaville* is released in France
- About 1,500 Vietcong mount a mortar attack on Dong Xoai and then overrun its military headquarters and adjoining militia compound.
- Chantal Goya's single "Une écharpe, une rose" is #3 on the Japanese charts. Her "Pinball Champ" would hit #6 in Japan the same year.

JULY-AUGUST

- U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson escalates the war in Vietnam, increasing the number of U.S. troops there from 75,000 to 125,000.
- The Rolling Stones' "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" tops the U.S. charts for a month.
- Dylan's sixth album *Highway 61 Revisited* is released. It includes the hit single "Like a Rolling Stone."
- Godard's *A Married Woman* is released in the U.S.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

- The student-run National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam stages the first public burning of a draft card
- The Beatles' "Yesterday" tops the U.S. charts for a month

NOVEMBER

- Cuba and the United States formally agree to start an airlift for Cubans who want to defect to the U.S.
- Godard's *Pierrot le fou*, starring Anna Karina and Jean-Paul Bémont, is released in France. It would not have a U.S. release.
- Quaker Norman Morrison immolates himself in front of The Pentagon to protest the war. A week later, Catholic Worker member Roger Allen LaPorte does the same in front of the UN building in New York.
- The Pentagon tells LBJ that the number of American troops in Vietnam must be increased from 125,000 to 400,000
- Godard begins filming *Masculine Feminine*

DECEMBER

- Charles de Gaulle defeats François Mitterrand and is elected President of the French Republic for a second seven-year term
- *Thunderball*, the top-grossing James Bond film to date, is released worldwide.

RIALTO PICTURES

Rialto Pictures, a company specializing in the re-release of classic films, was founded in 1997 by Bruce Goldstein. A year later, Adrienne Halpern joined him as partner. In 2002, Eric DiBernardo became the company's National Sales Director.

Rialto's releases have included Renoir's *Grand Illusion*; Carol Reed's *The Third Man*; Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*; Jules Dassin's *Rififi*; Vittorio De Sica's *Umberto D.*; Godard's *Contempt*, *Band of Outsiders* and *A Woman is a Woman*; Melville's *Bob Le Flambeur*; Julien Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko*; Buñuel's *Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* *Diary of a Chambermaid*, and *That Obscure Object of Desire*; John Schlesinger's *Billy Liar*; Clouzot's *Quai des Orfèvres*; Mike Nichols' *The Graduate*; Mel Brooks' *The Producers*; and many others.

Rialto's 2003 slate included *Le Cercle Rouge*, a late noir masterwork by Jean-Pierre Melville, and Jacques Becker's French gangster classic *Touchez pas au Grisbi*. Other 2003 releases included Bresson's *Au Hasard Balthazar* and Franju's *Eyes without a Face*. The company's first-run *Murderous Maids*, the chilling true story of two homicidal sisters, was released on DVD in September 2003.

Last year, Rialto released Gillo Pontecorvo's groundbreaking *The Battle of Algiers*, one of the biggest hits in the company's history; the original 1954 Japanese version of *Godzilla*, never before released in the U.S.; and the Oscar-winning documentary *Hearts and Minds*.

In addition to *Masculine Feminine*, Rialto's 2005 releases will include Claude Berri's *The Two of Us*, the story of a Jewish boy and an anti-Semitic old man (Michel Simon); Louis Malle's seminal New Wave thriller *Elevator to the Gallows*; and *Army of Shadows*, Melville's epic of the French Resistance, never before released in the U.S.

In 1999, Rialto received a special "Heritage Award" from the National Society of Film Critics and in 2000 received a special award from the New York Film Critics Circle. The Rialto partners have each received the French Order of Chevalier of Arts and Letters.

**Pressbook edited by Bruce Goldstein and Hyoe Yamamoto
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