

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 245-3200 Cable: Modernart

No. 4

Tuesday, January 9, 1968
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From January 22 to February 18 the Department of Film of The Museum of Modern Art will present 32 films in a series called "Godard on Film." Not only will the series include a chronological retrospective of the films of the French director (among them, his most recent feature -- TWO OR THREE THINGS I KNOW ABOUT HER and many shorts not seen here before) but also a group of films that have influenced Godard or that provide amusing and suggestive contrasts to his own work.

The series will open with William Wellman's classic 1931 gangster melodrama, THE PUBLIC ENEMY, in which a sly, magnetic young actor named James Cagney helped to create a new movie here -- the urban outlaw. On the following day, the Museum will screen Godard's first feature, BREATHLESS (1959), perhaps one of the two or three most influential movies of the last decade and a classic in spite of itself. At the center of the action is another extraordinary young actor -- Jean-Paul Belmondo as Michel, the doomed killer, the contemporary heir of the Cagney-Bogart-Gabin tradition.

The films in this cycle were selected and arranged by the critic Richard Roud whose new book, Godard, a critical study of the director's work, was published in London in October 1967, by Secker and Warburg and will be published here this month by Doubleday and Company, Inc. On the evening of January 31, Mr. Roud will give an illustrated lecture at the Museum on the films of Jean-Luc Godard.

THE PUBLIC ENEMY is one of the best examples of the American gangster genre -- swift, violent, ironic, romantic. These are the qualities that Godard's generation loved and responded to in American movies, and in BREATHLESS Godard wanted to recapture this part of the movie past. He did more than recapture it: he transformed it into a new expression of the modern world and into a new style of film.

During this series the Museum will alternate the films of Godard with 11 works from a variety of genres and/directors such as Dreyer, Rossellini, Resnais, Welles and Kubrick. The selections are intended to be intriguing rather than definitive; THE PUBLIC ENEMY is not the only introduction to BREATHLESS, IT'S ALWAYS FAIR

(more)

WEATHER (1955) is not the only introduction to A WOMAN IS A WOMAN (1961), etc. In some cases, the companion films are influences in a clear, "quotable" sense [Dreyer's THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC (1928) and Godard's MY LIFE TO LIVE (1962)]; as a rule, they are not. The "connection" may be one of setting and atmosphere [Welles' THE TRIAL (1963) and Godard's ALPHAVILLE (1965)], of contrasting styles and factions [Resnais' MURIEL (1963) and Godard's THE MARRIED WOMAN (1964)], of genre [Mankiewicz's THE BAREFOOT CONTESSA (1954) and Godard's CONTEMPT (1963)] -- radically different approaches to that peculiar, doubly specialized genre, the inside-the-movie-colony-in exile story].

Godard is the most movie-conscious of directors, a film enthusiast and critic who is also a film artist. This series is intended to provide some idea of the range of movie tradition -- the conventions, techniques, styles, directors -- that he both uses and surpasses. For no matter what the influence or comparison, Godard invariably produces a film that is strikingly personal, an expression of the most unique and contradictory talent now working in the medium.

The last of the companion films, Jean Rouch's CHRONICLE OF A SUMMER (1961), is paired with Godard's MASCULINE FEMININE (1966), which might be described as the chronicle of a winter. In DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES (1966), Godard continues to experiment with a form of dramatic movie journalism, a kind of fictionalized cinema-verité. This brings the series full circle, from thirties crime melodrama to the reality of modern Paris. Godard is responsive to the claims of both the past and the present; at his best he fuses them, using one to illuminate the other. In his own words, "In a general fashion, 'reportage' is only interesting when it's inserted in fiction, but fiction is interesting only when it is verified by reality. The 'nouvelle vague' is defined, in part, by this new rapport between fiction and reality. It is defined also by regret, by nostalgia for a cinema which no longer exists. As soon as you can make films -- you can no longer make films like the ones that made you want to make them." (Quote from N.Y. Film Bulletin, No. 46, 1964)

Born in Boston in 1929, Richard Roud first went to England as a Fulbright Scholar. He taught English there and did free-lance writing on movies before

(more)

joining the British Film Institute, which sponsors the London Festival. Until early last year, Mr. Roud was also the Program Officer of the British Film Institute, arranging some 20 special series each year since 1959 for the National Film Theatre. The pressure of his activities became so great that Mr. Roud relinquished this post in order to develop certain important programs for the National Film Theatre.

He is a prolific writer on film. He is the regular film critic for the Guardian and the London correspondent for Cahiers du Cinema, as well as a frequent contributor to the Sunday Times, Sight and Sound, Encounter and other publications.

Godard was born in Paris in December of 1930. He studied at Nyon (Switzerland), the Lycee Buffon (Paris), and the Sorbonne (Certificat d'Ethnologie, 1949). His first articles on film appeared in 1950 in Gazette du Cinema and in 1952 in Cahiers du Cinema (under the pseudonym of Hans Lucas). While working on a dam construction site in Switzerland, Godard shot his first film, OPERATION BETON, in 1954. From 1956-1959 he was a regular contributor to Cahiers du Cinema, one of the leading voices in the group of young critics (which included François Truffaut and Claude Chabrol) who became directors and caused a revolution in the French film industry. Godard is still an occasional contributor to Cahiers du Cinema. Since BREATHLESS, which was shot in Paris in the late summer of 1959, Godard has made 14 feature films. In addition to his feature work, the Museum series will include most of the shorts he made prior to 1959, as well as the sketches he contributed to such omnibus films as THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

The schedule of films follows:

- Mon. Jan. 22 PUBLIC ENEMY. 1931. Directed by William A. Wellman. Distributed by United Artists. 74 min.
- Tu. Jan. 23 UNE HISTOIRE D'EAU. 1958. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. 12 min.
BREATHLESS. 1959. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Pathe Contemporary Films, Inc., and Contemporary Films, Inc. 90 min.
- Th. Jan. 25 LES DAMES DU BOIS DU BOLOGNE. 1945. Directed by Robert Eresson. Distributed by Brandon Films. 90 min.
- Fri. Jan. 26 CHARLOTTE ET SON JULES. 1958. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. 14 min.
THE LITTLE SOLDIER. 1960. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by New Yorker Films and West End Films. 88 min.

(more)

- Sat. Jan. 27 IT'S ALWAYS FAIR WEATHER. 1955. Directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen. Distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 102 min.
- Sun. Jan. 28 ALL THE BOYS ARE CALLED PATRICK. 1957. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Janus Films. 21 min.
A WOMAN IS A WOMAN. 1961. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Pathe Contemporary Films, Inc., and Contemporary Films, Inc. 84 min.
- Mon. Jan. 29 THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC.* 1928. Directed by Carl-Theodor Dreyer. Distributed by Brandon Films. 85 min.
- Tu. Jan. 30 MY LIFE TO LIVE. 1962. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Pathe Contemporary Films, Inc., and Contemporary Films, Inc. 82 min.
- Th. Feb. 1 FLOWERS OF ST. FRANCIS. 1949. Directed by Roberto Rossellini. Distributed by Rizzoli Films. 78 min.
- Fri. Feb. 2 LES CARABINIERS. 1963. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by New Yorker Films and West End Films. 80 min.
- Sat. Feb. 3 THE BAREFOOT CONTESSA. 1954. Directed by Joseph Mankiewicz. Distributed by United Artists. 128 min.
- Sun. Feb. 4 LE GRAND ESCROC (sketch for LES PLUS BELLES ESCROQUERIES DU MONDE). 1963. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. 20 min.
CONTEMPT. 1963. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Embassy Pictures. 99 min.
- Mon. Feb. 5 THEY LIVE BY NIGHT. 1948. Directed by Nicholas Ray. Distributed by Brandon Films. 95 min.
- Tu. Feb. 6 MONTPARNASSE-LEVALLOIS (sketch in PARIS VU PAR...). 1963. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. 12 min.
BAND OF OUTSIDERS. 1964. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Royal Films International. 95 min.
- Th. Feb. 8 MURIEL. 1963. Directed by Alain Resnais. Distributed by Lopert Films. 115 min.
- Fri. Feb. 9 SLOTH (sketch in THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS). 1961. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Embassy Pictures. 20 min.
THE MARRIED WOMAN. 1964. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Royal Films International. 95 min.
- Sat. Feb. 10 THE TRIAL. 1963. Directed by Orson Welles. Distributed by Paramount Television Enterprises. 118 min.
- Sun. Feb. 11 LE NOUVEAU MONDE (sketch in ROGOPAG). 1963. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. 20 min.
ALPHAVILLE. 1965. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Pathe Contemporary Films, Inc., and Contemporary Films, Inc. 98 min.
- Mon. Feb. 12 LOLITA. 1962. Directed by Stanley Kubrick. Distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 152 min.
- Tu. Feb. 13 PIERROT LE FOU. 1965. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Astral Films, Toronto. 110 min.

- Th. Feb.15 CHRONICLE OF A SUMMER. 1961. Directed by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin. Distributed by Pathe Contemporary Films, Inc., and Contemporary Films, Inc. 90 min.
- Fri. Feb.16 UNE FEMME COQUETTE. 1955. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. 10 min.
MASCULINE FEMININE. 1966. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Distributed by Royal Films International. 103 min.
- Sat. Feb.17 DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES QUE JE SAIS D'ELLE. 1966. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. French version. No English sub-titles. 95 min.
- Sun. Feb.18 TO BE ANNOUNCED

*Silent films with piano accompaniment by Charles Hofmann.

Program subject to change without notice.

The hours for the above showings are: Sun., Mon., Tu., Fri.: 2 & 5:30; Th.: 2, 5:30 & 8; Sat.: 3 & 5:30.

 Stills and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Gary Arnold, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 245-3200.