

RESTORED IN 4K



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
SPECIAL GRAND JURY PRIZE 1973

THE MOTHER AND THE WHORE

A FILM BY
JEAN EUSTACHE

PIERRE COTTRELL presents



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SPECIAL GRAND JURY PRIZE 1973

BERNADETTE LAFONT • JEAN-PIERRE LÉAUD • FRANÇOISE LEBRUN

THE MOTHER AND THE WHORE

A FILM BY
JEAN EUSTACHE

FRANCE • 1973 • BLACK & WHITE • 3H40 • 1.37 • MONO • VISA N°40 264

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CHANEL

Alexandre, a young, idle dilettant, lives with his lover, Marie, and strolls around Paris's Left Bank. One day, he meets Veronika, a young nurse. He begins an affair with Veronika, without leaving Marie...





Before making this movie, I was in a bit of a bind. Everybody liked my films. I received very good reviews, and none of my films made a loss. But nobody would give me any money to make another one. My only funding until now came from Godard, late in the shoot, and ORTF, the public broadcaster, after much discussion, because they were documentaries, so not a problem apparently. This contradictory situation infuriated me. And that fury helped me write the dialogue of *The Mother and the Whore*. Dialogue, or rather monologues without shot structure, piled up every day to form the basis of a colossal film running 5-6 hours.

That fury translated into the fact that the protagonist contravened everything that people said and thought at the time. A curious but beneficial approach, I think. No matter the degree of accuracy or approximation of what he says. What matters is the creativity

deployed by the character, or the writer perhaps, to systematically gainsay. In the process, as in all paradoxes, an element of truth is revealed. And this excess takes the audience into a closed environment, specific to the character, which might be fairly hallucinatory and without comparison to what is usually shown. To give an idea of the need for provocation driving me, I should mention that the working title was *Du Pain et des Rolls* (*Bread & Rolls*). Along the way, in shooting and post-production, there was a shift, which has rarely occurred in film history, if you exclude the Pagnol trilogy and Hitchcock's *Psycho*: an invasive, omnipresent character yields to another character, played here by Fran oise Lebrun, who becomes the film's main protagonist. Jean-Pierre L aud, with his weary wordiness, becomes a frail being who depends entirely on her. Less provocative than L aud's and playing to the gallery less, Fran oise Lebrun's take on life

is more inhabited, more spontaneous, as well as even more invasive. It brings a new dimension to the movie.

Until now, in France, a swingeing tax, known as the release tax, was applied to each film in proportion to its length, which prohibited the distribution—and often production—of movies that took their time and were not blockbusters. The suppression of that tax in late 1972 enabled the development of filmmaking based on the duration, such as Rivette's *Out 1: Spectre*. *The Mother and the Whore* took advantage of this new situation. Obviously, from nearly four hours, more dramatic moments can be set apart from those when nothing happens, which are much more in keeping with real life. I might even say that four hours is the bare minimum, and that each cut I made to bring it down to three and a half hours caused me great pain. And that closed environment became more powerful the

longer the film went on. With each second, the audience departs further from its own life to enter into the characters' tragic world. It is no longer about making the characters' reality credible or not. The runtime means that they are indisputably there.

It's the only one of my movies where the past plays no part. It chimed with the life I was leading at the time it was shot, and matched it in a tragic way sometimes. Rite is also absent. Unless a rite in gestation can be perceived in these Left Bank lifestyles. We'll see in a few years. Unless the formal inflections and principle of the triangle reference the rites of classical tragedy with a modern veneer.

It is the only one of my films I am able to hate, because it keeps bringing me face-to-face with myself, in the present day. The past in my other films protects me. ■

JEAN EUSTACHE





FOR NEARLY HALF A CENTURY, THE MOTHER AND THE WHORE HAS HAUNTED CINEMA

Standing like a totem for film buffs and filmmakers, in France and overseas... The cult it generates among men and women who make cinema what it is today is international, and the list of its fans, from generation to generation is dizzying, going from Wim Wenders to Michael Haneke, from Jane Campion to Claire Denis, from Jim Jarmusch to Jacques Audiard, from John Waters to Gaspar Noé, from Noah Baumbach to Cédric Klapisch and Guillermo del Toro...

Forty-nine years after the scandal provoked by its screening at Cannes in May 1973 (the film won the Special Jury Prize and International Critics' Prize), and forty years after Jean Eustache's premature death in November 1981, *The Mother and the Whore* still speaks to us.

It had, however, become rare since its release, and never been restored. Nonetheless, it continued to symbolize something like the ultimate in auteur cinema, bedroom cinema, relationship cinema.

On whichever level you take it, it captivates: its uncommon length (three hours and forty minutes), its spectral and somehow primeval black & white. The performances (of three actors essentially: Jean-Pierre Léaud, Françoise Lebrun and Bernadette Lafont) are anticonformist in their manner of rejecting

naturalism while not rejecting sentiment. The director's restrained, pared-down touch is reminiscent of the mesmerizing assurance of the classics, the «fundamentals» that Eustache admired above all others: Renoir, Lubitsch, Guitry, Pagnol, Mizoguchi, Lang, Dreyer, Murnau...

With sparse resources at his disposal, Jean Eustache's direction deployed a rigorous shot breakdown to devote itself entirely to «dialogue on fire» in the words of Bernadette Lafont. That dialogue served as a repository for the generation that made May '68 and those that have followed since, including our own.

The film's exploration of relationships, the unrestrained freedom to love and the unassumable grip of love, its words, caught in the fever of romantic discourse, and lyricism, going from the sublime to the ridiculous via the sublime again, captured intimacy, like no other film, as it is spoken and written between two lovers over one, two or a hundred nights.

In that respect, fifty years, or nearly, have not aged it. Quite the contrary. *The Mother and the Whore* is the movie of men and women who ponder having to reinvent love.

Eustache said that, of all his movies, *The Mother and the Whore* was the one he «detested.» It could not be any other way: the story plunged him into the period of serial

loves in his recent past (Catherine Garnier, who ran a fashion store not far from Le Select on Boulevard du Montparnasse and who was responsible for the film's costumes, and Marinka Matuszewski, a nurse anesthetist at Laennec Hospital on Rue de Sèvres, who makes a brief appearance in the film outside Café de Flore), forming a love triangle within a few streets of the «neighborhood,» as it is called in the film, whose parameters are located between Montparnasse and Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Eustache felt impelled to write after he failed to receive a grant in the expected proportions for what was supposed to be his first feature: *Mes petites amoureuses*. But *The Mother and the Whore* interrupted that schedule. This was an emergency. Eustache shot *The Mother and the Whore* in Paris in seven weeks across June and July, 1972, demanding of his actors that they respect to the letter what was on the page. It could not be any other way for him: before revisiting childhood memories, he had to write, direct and, therefore, see and hear the present-day disorder of his love life in order to begin to understand it. The first thing to strike the audience is the film's rawness—a boundless love story that only the cinema might, perhaps, console. Eustache believed he could write the script of *The Mother and the Whore* in a week. He reported that, at the end of one week, he had not yet completed the opening scene.

On its release, in 1973, *The Mother and the Whore* provoked a scandal: like no other, the film speaks of free love and a love triangle with gripping authenticity; it also raises the issue of abortion, a hot-button topic at the time. Some audience members spluttered in outrage at what they considered pornographic dialogue (Oh, a Tampax! Oh, an irrepressible urge to

puke! Oh, garrulous intoxication! Oh, naked bodies and women discussing the shape of a dick!). Today, these pretexts might raise a smile but they require consideration, for they express the filmmaker's desire to spare nothing in what plays out in relationships between men and women in 1972, beyond the couple: all-powerful male, fawning young woman.

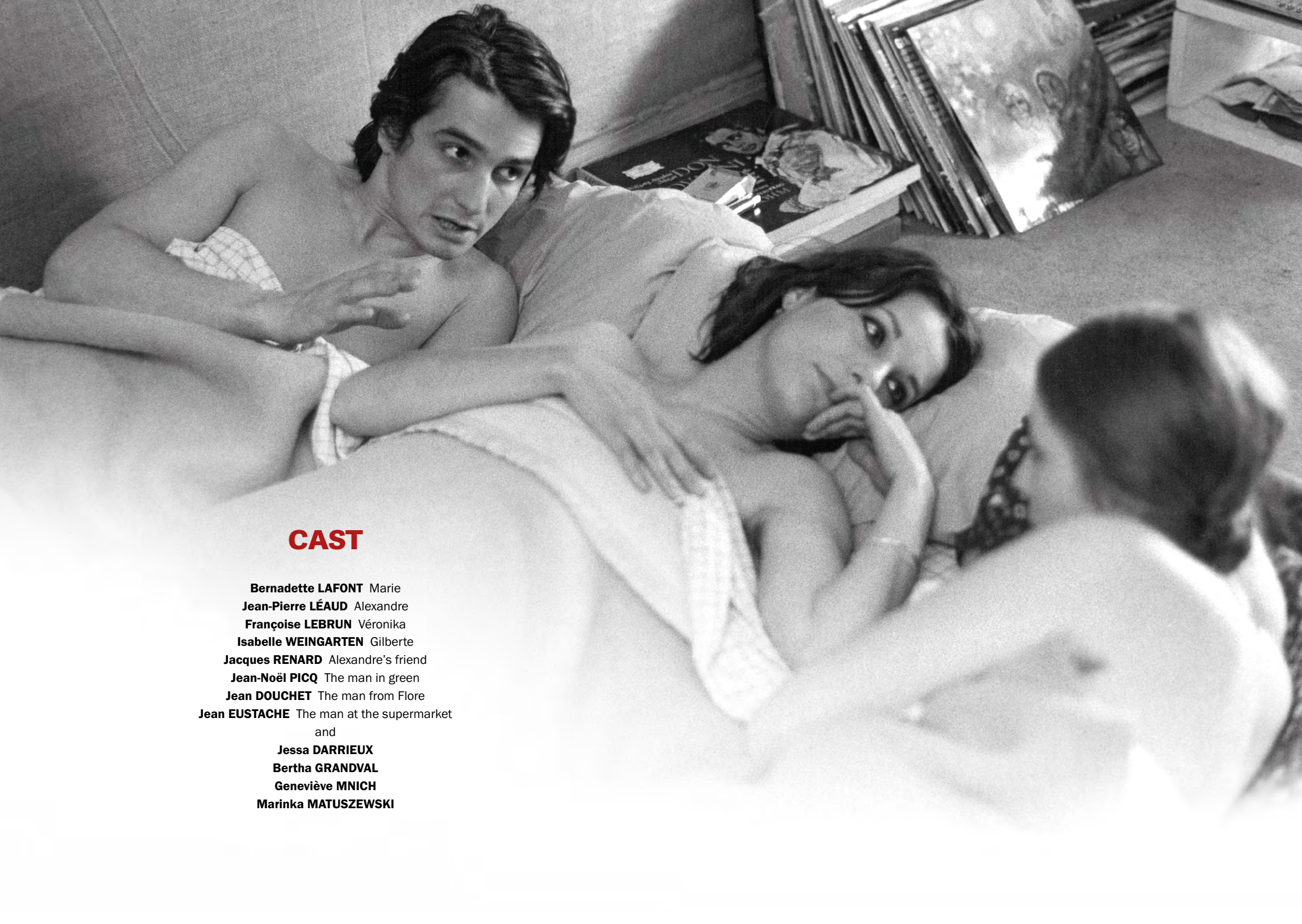
That idea takes a beating. *The Mother and the Whore* is the film from which no cliché, nor presumption emerges intact. That is what continues to make the film not only modern but also our contemporary. It portrays the collapse of convictions set in stone. Amid alcohol, love and conversation.

Today, *The Mother and the Whore* is re-released. Restored at last and presented in the full 1973 version, including a scene cut by Boris Eustache for an initial re-release in 1982: Alexandre and Marie go to the movies to see *Les Idolewarc O'* from 1968 edited by Eustache (who worked as an editor from 1965 to 1971, notably for Luc Moullet and alongside Jacques Rivette on *Jean Renoir, le Patron*).

The re-release of *The Mother and the Whore* only the first and most emblematic stage in a long process of restoration of the director's work, which will be progressively re-released throughout 2022-2023, accompanied by new releases on DVD/Blu-Ray and a fresh critical overview. For too long, Eustache's inflammatory film was classed with those of the great doomed talents. It was urgent to show his movies again, to make them scandalous again, still controversial, moving in every way, and alive. There is no mother and there is no whore. And this film keeps on telling us so, in the present tense. ■







CAST

Bernadette LAFONT Marie
Jean-Pierre LÉAUD Alexandre
Françoise LEBRUN Véronika
Isabelle WEINGARTEN Gilberte
Jacques RENARD Alexandre's friend
Jean-Noël PICQ The man in green
Jean DOUCHET The man from Flore
Jean EUSTACHE The man at the supermarket
and
Jessa DARRIEUX
Bertha GRANDVAL
Geneviève MNICH
Marinka MATUSZEWSKI



CREW

Pierre COTTRELL presents

A co-production

ELITE FILMS

CINE QUA NON

LES FILMS DU LOSANGE

SIMAR FILMS

V M PRODUCTIONS

Written and directed by

Jean EUSTACHE

Cinematography

Pierre LHOMME

With the assistance of

Jacques RENARD, Michel CENET

Sound

Jean-Pierre RUH, Paul LAINE

Mixing

Nara KOLLERY

Costumes

Catherine GARNIER

Editing

Jean EUSTACHE, Denise de CASABIANCA

Editing Assistant

Monique PRIM

Script

Irène LHOMME

Director's Assistants

Luc BERAUD, Rémy DUCHEMIN

Set photographer

Bernard PRIM

Gaffer

Claude BERTRAND



**JEAN EUSTACHE'S
FILMOGRAPHY**





ROBINSON'S PLACE / BAD COMPANY

France, 1963, 42 min, B&W, 16mm blown-up in 35mm
Written, directed and produced by Jean Eustache • Cinematography Philippe Théaudière, with the help of Michel H. Robert • Editing Jean Eustache • Music César Gattegno
Script, gaffer, assistant Jeanne Delos
Cast : Aristide Demonico (Jackson), Daniel Bart (his friend), Dominique Jayr (the young woman), Jean Eustache (the men with the R4)

Premiere: Evian Film Festival 1964

The film was screened in Evian and Paris in 1964 under the title ROBINSON'S PLACE. For its re-release with SANTA CLAUS HAS BLUE EYES in 1967, the program made up of these two short films took the title BAD COMPANY. Since then, this title has been used most of the time to designate Jean Eustache's first film.



SANTA CLAUS HAS BLUE EYES

France, 1965/66, 47 min, B&W, 35mm
Written and directed by Jean Eustache • Production Anouchka Films (Jean-Luc Godard) • Cinematography Philippe Théaudière, Nestor Almendros • Camera assistants Daniel Cardot, Daniel Lacambre • Editing Christiane Lack, Jean Eustache • Sound Bernard Aubouy Mixing Antoine Bonfanti • Gaffer and assistant director Bernard Stora, Jeanne Delos • Script Aline Lecomte • Music René Coll, César Gattegno
Cast : Jean-Pierre Léaud (Daniel), Gérard Zimmerman (Dumas), Henri Martinez (Martinez), René Gilson (the photographer), Carmen Ripoll (Martine), Maurice Domingo (Maurice), Michèle Maynard (the woman at the bank), Noëlle Baleste (Janine), Rosette Mourut (Rosette), Jean Eustache (the former boxer), Jeanne Delos (the bookstore saleswoman), Alain Derboy, Georges Riccio, Jacques Larson, Cendrine Carnero

Premiere: May 1966, Cannes Film Festival (Critics' Week)

The film is dedicated to Charles Trenet



THE VIRGIN OF PESSAC

France, 1968, 65 min, B&W, 16mm blown-up in 35mm
Directed by: Jean Eustache • Production Jean Eustache / Films Luc Moullet, Mediane Films • Assistant director and editing Françoise Lebrun • Cinematography Philippe Théaudière, Jean-Yves Coïc, Daniel Cardot • Editing Jean Eustache • Sound Jean-Pierre Ruh, Alain Sempé

Premiere: 28th of December 1968 (TV), May 1969 at Cannes Film Festival (Critics' Week)



THE PIG

France, 1970, 52 min, B&W, 16mm
Directed by Jean Eustache, Jean-Michel Barjol • Production Luc Moullet, Françoise Lebrun • Cinematography Philippe Théaudière, Renan Polles • Editing Jean Eustache • Sound Jean-Pierre Ruh, François Carré

Premiere: February 1971. The film was presented in 1971 at the Festivals of Tours and Hyères



NUMERO ZERO / ODETTE ROBERT

France, 1971, 110 min, B&W, 16mm
A 54-minutes version edited by Jean Eustache was broadcast on French television under the title ODETTE ROBERT. After the reconstruction of the full version in 2002, NUMERO ZERO was blown up to 35mm.
Directed by Jean Eustache • Production Jean Eustache, Luc Moullet • Cinematography Philippe Théaudière (interiors), Adolfo Arrieta (outdoor) • Editing Jean Eustache • Sound Jean-Pierre Ruh

Cast: Odette Robert, Jean Eustache, Boris Eustache

Premiere: ODETTE ROBERT in August 1980 (TV), NUMERO ZERO in July 2002 at the Marseille FID



THE MOTHER AND THE WHORE

France, 1973, 220 min, B&W, 16mm blown-up in 35mm
Written and directed by Jean Eustache • Produced by Pierre Cottrell • Production Elite Films, Simar Films, Cine-Qua-Non, V.M. Productions, Les Films du Losange
Cinematography Pierre Lhomme • Camera assistants Jacques Renard, Michel Cenet • Editing Jean Eustache, Denise de Casabianca • Editing assistant Monique Prim
Sound Jean-Pierre Ruh, Paul Lainé • Mixing Nara Kollery
Costumes Catherine Garnier • Assistants director Luc Béraud, Rémy Duchemin • Script Irène Lhomme • Music: Zarah Leander (Ich weiß, es wird einmal ein Wunder gescheh'n), Damia (Un souvenir), Marlene Dietrich (Falling in love again), Fréhel (La chanson des Fortifs), Edith Piaf (Les amants de Paris), Deep Purple (Concerto for Group and Orchestra), Mozart (Requiem), Offenbach (Die schöne Helena)

Cast: Jean-Pierre Léaud (Alexandre), Françoise Lebrun (Veronika), Bernadette Lafont (Marie), Isabelle Weingarten (Gilberte), Jacques Renard (Alexandre's friend), Jean-Noël Picq (the men in green), Jean Douchet (the man at the Café Flore), Noël Simsolo (the intellectual), Jessa Darrieux (the woman with the bandage), Geneviève Mnich (Veronika's friend), Berthe Grandval (Marie's friend), Bernard Eisenschitz (Maurice), Pierre Cottrell (Maurice's friend), Jean Eustache (Gilberte's partner), Marinka Matuszewski, Jean-Claude Biette, André Téchiné

Premiere: May 1973 at Cannes Film Festival (Official Competition)

The film is dedicated to Catherine Garnier



MY LITTLE LOVES

France, 1974, 123 min, color, 35mm
Written and directed by Jean Eustache • Produced by Pierre Cottrell • Production Elite Films • Cinematography Nestor Almendros • Camera assistants Jean-Claude Rivière, Dominique Le Rigoleur • Editing: Françoise Belleville, Alberto Yaccellini, Vincent Cottrell, Jean Eustache • Sound Bernard Aubouy, Bernard Ortion • Mixing Bernard Aubouy, Nara Kollery
Costumes Renée Renard • Assistants director Luc Béraud, Bertrand Van Effenterre, Alain Centonze, Denys Granier-Deferre • Script Irène Lhomme, Danièle Desouches • Music Charles Trénet (Douce France), Théodore Botrel (La maman du petit homme)

Cast: Martin Loeb (Daniel), Ingrid Caven (his mother), Jacqueline Dufranne (the grandmother), Dionys Mascolo (José), Henri Martinez (Henri, the workshop owner), Jean-Noël Picq (Henri's friend), Maurice Pialat (Henri's friend, the man who makes Daniel recite the alphabet), Pierre Edelman (Louis), Marie-Paule Fernandez (Françoise), Patrick Eustache (the 6th grade boy)

Premiere: December 1974

The film is dedicated to Odette and Louis Robert



A DIRTY STORY

France, 1977, 28 min, 35mm, color (*first version*), 22 min, 16mm, color (*second version*)

FIRST VERSION: Cinematography Jacques Renard • Camera assistants Jean-Noël Ferragut, Jacques Steyn
Editing Chantal Colomer, Jean Eustache • Sound Roger Letellier • Assistant director Elisabeth Couturier, Bertrand Van Effenterre • Script: Claude Luquet

Cast: Michaël Lonsdale (the narrator), Jean Douchet (the director), Douchka, Laura Fanning, Josée Yann, Jacques Burloux

SECOND VERSION: Cinematography Pierre Lhomme, Michel Cenet • Editing Chantal Colomer, Jean Eustache
Sound Bernard Ortion • Assistants director Luc Béraud, Bertrand Van Effenterre

Cast: Jean Noël Picq (the narrator), Elisabeth Lanchener, Françoise Lebrun, Virginie Thévenet, Annette Wademant

Premiere: Österreichisches Filmmuseum Wien, October 1977





THE VIRGIN OF PESSAC 79

France, 1979, 67 min, color, 16mm
Directed by Jean Eustache • Production INA, ZDF, Médiane Films • Cinematography Robert Alazraki, Jean-Yves Coïc, Armand Marco, Philippe Théaudière • Camera assistants Florent Bazin, Patrick Beraux, Michel Thiviet, Caroline Champetier, Françoise Manceaux • Editing Chantal Colomer, Jean Eustache • Sound Gérard Barra, Bruno Charier, Gérard de Lagarde, Georges Prat • Mixing: Dominique Hennequin • Assistant director: Boris Eustache

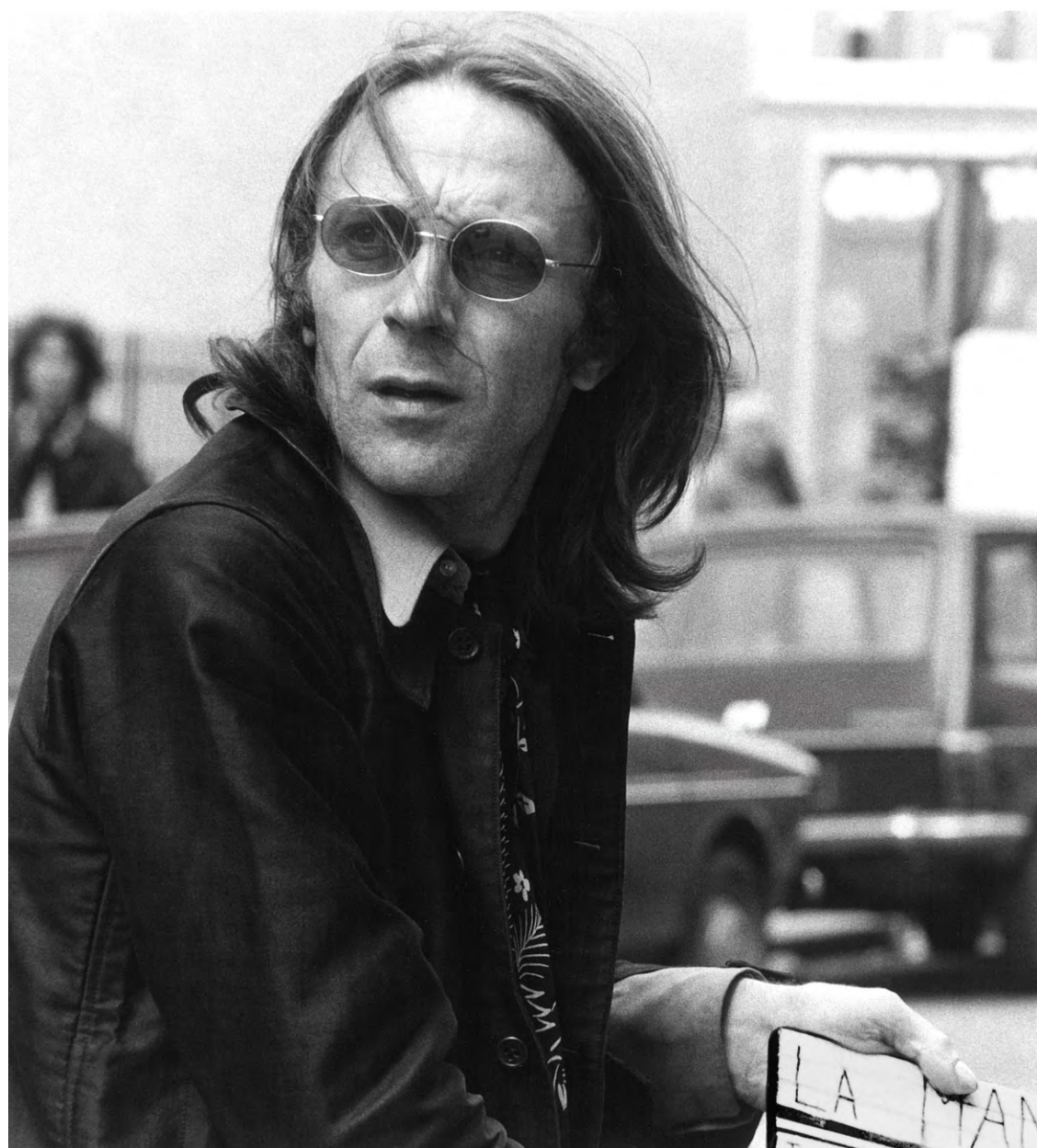
Premiere: *Österreichisches Filmmuseum Wien, December 1979*



LES PHOTOS D'ALIX

France, 1980, 18 min, color, 35mm
Directed by Jean Eustache • Production Mediane Films. Cinematography • Robert Alazraki • Editing Jean Eustache, Chantal Colomer • Sound: Bruno Charier
Cast: Alix Cléo-Roubaud, Boris Eustache

Television broadcast : *1982 on Antenne 2, in the program « Histoires courtes »*



BERNADETTE LAFONT

1957 - **Handsome Serge** by Claude Chabrol
1959 - **Web of Passion** by Claude Chabrol
1959 - **Good Time Girls** by Claude Chabrol
1959 - **Mouth Watering** by Jacques Doniol-Valcroze
1964 - **Male Hunt** by Edouard Molinaro
1964 - **The Sleeping Car Murders** by Costa-Gavras
1965 - **High Lifers** by Georges Lautner
1966 - **Idiot in Paris** by Serge Korber
1966 - **The Thief of Paris** by Louis Malle
1969 - **The Pirate's Fiancée** by Nelly Kaplan
1971 - **Catch Me a Spy** by Richard Clement
1972 - **The Mother and the Whore** by Jean Eustache
1972 - **A Gorgeous Girl Like Me** by François Truffaut
1977 - **Violette** by Claude Chabrol
1983 - **Dog Day** by Yves Boisset
1983 - **Gwendoline** by Just Jaeckin
1985 - **An Impudent Girl** by Claude Miller
1985 - **Inspector Lavardin** by Claude Chabrol
1986 - **Masks** by Claude Chabrol
1996 - **Genealogies of a Crime** by Raoul Ruiz
2001 - **Lovers of the Nile** by Eric Heumann
2005 - **I Do** by Éric Lartigau
2006 - **Broken English** by Zoe R. Cassavetes
2007 - **London mon amour** by Lorraine Lévy
2010 - **Skylab** by Julie Delpy
2010 - **A Cat in Paris** by Alain Gagnol, Jean-Loup Felicioli
2012 - **Attila Marcel** by Sylvain Chomet
2012 - **Paulette** by Jérôme Enrico

JEAN-PIERRE LÉAUD

1957 - **King on Horseback** by Georges Lampin
1958 - **The 400 Blows** by François Truffaut
1959 - **Testament of Orpheus** by Jean Cocteau
1960 - **Boulevard** by Julien Duvivier
1964 - **Secret Agent FX18** by Jean-Louis Richard
1965 - **Masculin féminin** by Jean-Luc Godard
1965 - **Pierrot le fou** by Jean-Luc Godard
1966 - **Made in U.S.A.** by Jean-Luc

Godard
1966 - **The Oldest Profession in the World** by Jean-Luc Godard
1967 - **The Chinese** by Jean-Luc Godard
1967 - **The Departure** by Jerzy Skolimowski
1967 - **Joyful Wisdom** by Jean-Luc Godard
1968 - **Stolen Kisses** by François Truffaut
1968 - **Porcile** by Pier Paolo Pasolini
1970 - **Bed & Board** by François Truffaut
1972 - **The Mother and the Whore** by Jean Eustache
1972 - **Day for Night** by François Truffaut
1972 - **Last Tango in Paris** by Bernardo Bertolucci
1978 **Love on the Run** by François Truffaut
1984 - **Detective** by Jean-Luc Godard
1987 - **Virgin** by Catherine Breillat
1987 - **Jane B. for Agnes V.** by Agnès Varda
1990 - **I Hired a Contract Killer** by Aki Kaurismäki
1991 - **Paris Awakens** by Olivier Assayas
1991 - **The Bohemian Life** by Aki Kaurismäki
1993 - **The Birth of Love** by Philippe Garrel
1995 - **My Man** by Bertrand Blier
1996 - **Irma Vep** by Olivier Assayas
1996 - **Just for Laughs!** by Lucas Belvaux
1999 - **A Question of Taste** by Bernard Rapp
2000 - **The Pornographer** by Bertrand Bonello
2008 - **Face** by Ming-liang Tsai
2010 - **Le Havre** by Aki Kaurismäki
2011 - **Camille Rewinds** by Noémie Lvovsky
2015 - **The Death of Louis XIV** by Albert Serra

FRANÇOISE LEBRUN

1972 - **The Mother and the Whore** by Jean Eustache
1975 - **French Provincial** by André Téchiné
1997 - **Just for Laughs!** by Lucas Belvaux
2006 - **Seraphine** by Martin Provost
2006 - **The Diving Bell and the Butterfly** by Julian Schnabel
2008 - **Julie & Julia** by Nora Ephron
2012 - **The Nun** by Guillaume Nicloux
2014 - **Looking for Her** by Ounie Lecomte
2016 - **The Sower** by Marine Francen
2021 - **Vortex** by Gaspar Noé





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