

**PRESS PACK**

**CANNES CLASSICS OFFICIAL SELECTION 2015**



SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE  
**CANNES CLASSICS**  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

# MARIUS

by Marcel Pagnol (1931)  
Directed by Alexander Korda

**Thursday 21 May 2015 at 5pm, Buñuel Theatre**



Raimu and Pierre Fresnay in *Marius* by Marcel Pagnol (1931). Directed by Alexander Korda.

Film restored in 2015 by the **Compagnie Méditerranéenne de Films - MPC** and **La Cinémathèque Française**,  
with the support of the **CNC**, the **Franco-American Cultural Fund (DGA-MPA-SACEM- WGAW)**,  
the backing of **ARTE France Unité Cinéma** and the **Archives Audiovisuelles de Monaco**,  
and the participation of **SOGEDA Monaco**.

The restoration was supervised by **Nicolas Pagnol**, and **Hervé Pichard** (La Cinémathèque Française).

The work was carried out by **DIGIMAGE**.

Colour grading by **Guillaume Schiffman**, director of photography.

**Fanny** by Marcel Pagnol (Directed by Marc Allégret, 1932) and **César** by Marcel Pagnol (1936), which complete **Marcel Pagnol's Marseilles trilogy**, were also restored in 2015.

"All Marseilles, the Marseilles of everyday life, the Marseilles of sunshine and good humour, is here...

The whole of the city expresses itself, and a whole race speaks and lives. "

**René Bizet**, *Pour vous*, 15 October 1931



**SOGEDA Monaco**



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Before restoration



After restoration



*Marius* by Marcel Pagnol (1931). Directed by Alexander Korda.

## The restoration of the Marseilles trilogy begins with *Marius*

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"Towards 1925, when I felt as if I was exiled in Paris, I realised that I loved Marseilles and I wanted to express this love by writing a Marseilles play.

My friends and betters tried to dissuade me: they said that such a local work, portraying characters with such a particular accent, would certainly not be understood outside the Bouches-du-Rhône, and that even in Marseilles itself it would be considered the work of an amateur. These were persuasive reasons and I abandoned my idea. However, in 1926, I saw *Le Mariage de Mlle Beulemans*, a Belgian masterpiece that was already 16 years old and had been successful all over the world.

That evening, I realised that a local work, which was profoundly sincere and authentic, could sometimes find a place in the literary heritage of a country and be popular the world over. "

**Marcel Pagnol**, *Speech to a Brussels audience*, 1960

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Marcel Pagnol's "Marseilles trilogy" is currently being restored by the **COMPAGNIE MEDITERRANEENNE DE FILMS - MPC** and **La Cinémathèque Française**, with the support of CNC, the Franco-American Cultural Fund (DGA-MPA-SACEM- WGAW), the backing of **ARTE France Unité Cinéma** and the **Archives Audiovisuelles de Monaco**, and the participation of **SOGEDA Monaco**.

*Marius*, *Fanny* and *César* will therefore be preserved under the best conditions and will be shown to a very wide public, both in France and abroad, to celebrate **the 120th anniversary of the birth of Marcel Pagnol**. Following the many events that have been announced, **a complete retrospective of his work will be presented in 2016 at La Cinémathèque Française**.

The restoration work has been carried out by **Digimage**, following standards recommended by the CNC as part of its selective assistance with the digitalisation of heritage cinematographic works, resulting in a return to film and long-lasting preservation of these three inseparable works.

*Marius*, *Fanny* and *César*, like many other great classics of the 1930s, have been re-issued many times and the original negatives, image and sound have unfortunately been handled too often. The original photochemical elements, on nitrate film, are now particularly damaged.

**The nitrate negative of *Marius* was scanned in 4K by immersion** in order to preserve the photographic quality of the images and remove any surface scratches. Next, the biggest defects (stains, tears etc.), caused by the wear and tear of the film, were treated image by image. Over 400 hours of work were needed to obtain the final result. **The colour grading in proxy 2K** was supervised by the chief operator **Guillaume Schiffman**, a huge fan of Marcel Pagnol's films. He brought his own vision and technical skills, while respecting the contrasts and light density specific to the early 1930s, as created by the director of photography at the time, **Theodore J. Pahle**.

Likewise, *Marius*, which was shot using very early sound recording processes (from Western Electric), required careful, precise work to restore the intelligibility of the dialogue without altering the original sound. The restoration was carried out using the nitrate sound negative and a countertype to fill in the blanks.

## With *Marius*, Pagnol launched a defence of talking films

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"For Pagnol, the accent was not a picturesque accessory, a note of local colour, it was part and parcel of the text, and therefore the characters. His heroes possessed an accent like others have black skin. The accent was the quintessence of their language, their realism. Pagnol's cinema was quite the opposite of theatrical, he used words to create the specific realistic nature of film. Pagnol was not just a playwright who turned to cinema, but one of the greatest authors of talking films."

André Bazin (1953)

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***Marius* was undoubtedly one of the first great talking films of French cinema.** Successfully adapted from the play by **Marcel Pagnol**, the first film in the Marseilles trilogy was directed by **Alexander Korda** in 1931, supervised by the author, in the **new Paramount studios**. The complicity between the two men, together with the actors from the **Théâtre de Paris** (**Raimu, Pierre Fresnay, Orane Demazis** etc.) resulted in a humanist, realistic film, with a universal message and a South of France feel. ***Marius***, followed by ***Fanny***, directed by Marc Allégret the following year, then by ***César*** in 1936, would turn the young, inexperienced playwright into one of the most remarkable French directors, writers, producers and inventors of genius.

After the triumph of ***Topaze*** at the Théâtre des Variétés, ***Marius***, which was inspired by Molière's *L'École des femmes* (The School for Wives) and Beaumarchais' *Barbier de Séville* (The Barber of Seville), was performed at the Théâtre de Paris on 9 March 1929, with the same actors who starred in the film two years later.

In London in the spring of 1930, Marcel Pagnol discovered, on a recommendation from Pierre Blanchard, the first fully talking feature film, the American musical ***Broadway Melody*** by Harry Beaumont. Blown away by this new invention, Pagnol expressed his enthusiasm and published an article on the new potential offered by talking cinema in the daily newspaper *Le Journal*, on 17 May 1930. He defended "the immense artistic and commercial value of this new method of expression" and some paragraphs demonstrate an astonishingly modern approach: "We could write a whispered scene, and make it heard by three thousand people, without changing the timbre or the value of the whisper. This is a new area: tragedy or psychology can be expressed, without cries or gestures, with an admirable simplicity and measure, unknown to date."

His theories however encountered fierce opposition from writers and theatre directors, who thought that talking films would lose them business. Talking films were seen as a temporary curiosity then, as their success grew, they frightened a large part of the profession, who stayed faithful to silent films for their artistic, and above all economic values.

There were many reasons why they were concerned about talking films. Many actors from the 1920s expressed themselves through gestures and were incapable of reciting a text with emotion. The economy of silent films was based on international distribution, something which talking films could not offer. Likewise, the early sound recording techniques produced unconvincing results. Marcel Pagnol recognised this himself: "Talking films required the construction of new soundproof studios, we had to hire American equipment at a high price, and pay large salaries to specialist engineers whose presence was essential, as the mysterious sound machines were very fragile."

## Pagnol and his cinematic débuts

Pagnol, convinced of the merits of talking films, nevertheless had to learn the film making process. He began by working with the production director **Robert T. Kane**, two weeks after the opening of the **Réservoirs Studios** built by Paramount in Saint-Maurice. Here, he discovered the different tasks, how the studios were organised and later, the hostility towards writers, which would finally lead him to found his own studios.

The sound productions by Paramount in France were not very convincing and there were several failures. However, following the unexpected success of an early French film, *Jean de la Lune* by Jean Choux, Kane suggested that Pagnol adapt *Marius* for the cinema. After much hesitation, Paramount accepted the author's conditions, firstly the use of the actors from the play. He also asserted his copyright over the revenues. In consideration for this, Pagnol authorised a German and Swedish version of *Marius*. He supervised the French production and worked with an experienced director, **Alexander Korda**.

Korda had already produced a number of silent films in Hungary, his native country, then in other European countries. In the United States, he had been involved in the first talking film experiments, and had directed three fully talking films between 1929 and 1930, including *The Squall* and *Women Everywhere*. He then left Hollywood to join Paramount's French studios. **Marcel Pagnol** and **Raimu**, who were initially reluctant to entrust the direction to a foreigner, who would not be very sensitive to the spirit of the South of France, were surprised to find an erudite and attentive film maker, respectful of the adaptation proposed by the author, who contributed his expertise and made directorial suggestions, whilst respecting the wishes of Marcel Pagnol. Despite a few technical complications, related to the recording of live sound, the filming took place in a very harmonious atmosphere between the two men and the actors, who knew their roles so well.

Despite the producers' mistrust, who thought the film was "amateur" and way too long, Kane kept his promises and accepted the film offered by Korda and Pagnol, without being confident of its success. The considerable public success of *Marius* encouraged Pagnol to develop other projects, in which he was increasingly involved. He therefore began to write *Fanny*.

**Hervé Pichard** (In charge of restoration for La Cinémathèque Française).



# MARIUS

by Marcel Pagnol (1931)  
Directed by Alexander Korda

## Technical credits

A film by	Marcel Pagnol
Director	Alexander Korda
Producer	Paramount Studios
Screenplay and dialogue	Marcel Pagnol
Original author	Marcel Pagnol
Director of photography	Ted Pahle
Music	Francis Gromon
Scenery	Zoltan Korda, Alfred Junge
Editing	Roger Spiri-Mercanton
Distribution	Paramount
Length	120 minutes
Image format	1: 20

## Artistic credits

Raimu	César
Pierre Fresnay	Marius
Fernand Charpin	Panisse
Orane Demazis	Fanny
Alida Rouffe	Honorine
Paul Dullac	Escartefigue

The exterior scenes of *Marius* were shot in Marseilles, in the very locations where the action takes place. It was not the first time that the natural scenery of Marseilles had been filmed (Jean Epstein had produced *Cœur Fidèle* there in 1923). But *Marius* undoubtedly made Marseilles popular more than any other film. The interior scenes were shot in the Joinville studios. The film enjoyed a huge commercial success, including abroad, allowing Pagnol to gain his independence as a producer and turning his actors into great stars.

## 2015, celebration of the 120th anniversary of the birth of Marcel Pagnol

Marcel Pagnol was born in 1895, at the same time as the birth of cinema. 2015 will be marked by the celebration of the 120th anniversary of his birth. To mark the occasion, Nicolas Pagnol, Marcel's grandson and manager of the Compagnie Méditerranéenne de Films, is planning a series of events throughout 2015 and into 2016:



Nadia Gray et Marcel Pagnol au Festival de Cannes, 1955

- 26, 27 and 28 August 2015: Free, outdoor showing at Marseilles old port.
- September 2015: cinematic re-release.
- October 2015: evening paying tribute to Marcel Pagnol as part of the "Tout l'Art du Cinéma à Monaco".
- November 2015: release of the Trilogy on DVD and showing on Arte.
- 2016: Showing at the City of Lights, City of Angels (ColCoa) - Los Angeles.
- 2016: Full Marcel Pagnol retrospective at La Cinémathèque Française.



*Marius* de Marcel Pagnol (1931). Mise en scène d'Alexandre Korda.



We are experiencing an abundant period in which our cinematic heritage can be made available to everyone. Thanks to the cinematic heritage digitalisation system set up in 2012, to date 307 feature films and 150 short films, of all genres, have been restored. Some major works have therefore found their way back into cinemas, such as *Carrosse d'or* by Jean Renoir, *L'Homme de Rio* by Philippe de Broca, or one of the first soap operas in audiovisual history, *Fantômas* by Louis Feuillade. In addition to the CNC's mission to preserve cinematic culture, we have decided to contribute to the range of films legally available on the Internet by supporting the digitalisation of old films with online sales of DVDs. It is not just a question of memory, it is about defending our civilisation, as the cinema's past fuels its future.

Restoring life to a film is a long, delicate and costly enterprise which requires time, expertise and technology. *Marius* is one of the iconic films of French cinema history which had suffered particular damage, as the original material had been used for reissues many times. The soundtrack, witness of the early days of talking films, had become virtually inaudible. The extent of the work required can therefore be appreciated.

To achieve this, synergies were needed between various institutions in the sector: the CNC's assistance for digitalisation of heritage works, the support of La Cinémathèque Française, Arte France Cinema Unit, and contributions from private bodies such as the Franco-American Cultural Fund and the Archives Audiovisuelles de Monaco. However, this was not enough, and Nicolas Pagnol, the leader of the project to restore the film written by his grandfather, was required to seek other methods of support. Through the Internet and crowdfunding, he managed to collect the final contributions which were essential to restoring this major work of French cinema. This modern, original combination of individual and collective, private and public contributions in support of cinematic heritage is certainly a model that should be continued.

**Frédérique Bredin**  
**CNC President**





### Franco-American Cultural Fund - DGA - MPA - SACEM – WGAW

Founded in 1996 by **SACEM**, the **Franco-American Cultural Fund (FCFA)** is a unique collaboration between the **Directors Guild of America (DGA)**, the **Motion Picture Association (MPA)**, the **Writers Guild of America West (WGAW)** and the **Société des auteurs, compositeurs et éditeurs de musique (SACEM)**. The purpose of the FCFA is to promote and teach the art of cinema, financed by resources from private copies.

It supports cinematic creation and restoration, encourages talent and promotes dialogue between professionals in the two countries.

Its Honorary President is **Costa-Gavras**.



### Archives Audiovisuelles de Monaco

Since the organisation was founded in 1997, the **Archives Audiovisuelles de Monaco** have been committed to a policy of collecting documents from Monaco institutions and also, more widely, from individuals. Its collections primarily comprise professional or amateur films, photographs and sound recordings related to the Principality and originating from donations and voluntary deposits. Its collections also come from the support of various international bodies, Archives or Film Libraries.

Other documents are also preserved in order to safeguard international audiovisual heritage.

The Archives collects all sorts of documents relating to cinema and its history: photographs, posters, magazines and books. The Archives pursues its mission to restore damaged silver films, whether these are copies on nitrate film, negatives or unique copies.

For example, it restored a short film by Sacha Guitry shot in 1954 for the launch of Télé Monte-Carlo, which was presented as part of the Cinémathèque Française retrospective on the film director in 2007. A restoration plan has recently begun to safeguard the nitrate films from the Monaco Oceanographic Museum, combining photochemical and digital techniques. The Télé Monte-Carlo archives have also been the subject of a digitalisation plan for several years.

Since 1998, under the label "Monaco in films", the Archives have disseminated the Principality of Monaco's cinematic and audiovisual heritage. It also participates in cultural events organised by the Prince Pierre of Monaco Foundation, the New National Museum of Monaco or the Grimaldi Forum. Since 2004, it has been committed to promoting cinematic culture, organising an annual film cycle christened "Les Mardis du Cinéma". This action aims to present cinema as an artistic discipline, by showing films in all forms and genres, from all continents, in particular restored films, copies of which are lent by "partner" film libraries. This cycle of films also includes an educational programme aimed at Monaco's schools. The diversity of this programming is evidence of the project's humbly ambitious aim to show Monaco: "Tout l'Art du cinéma" (the whole art of cinema).

In 2011, the Archives Audiovisuelles incorporated the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAP).