



a coproduction LITTLE BEAR - GAUMONT - PATHE PRODUCTION

OFFICIAL SELECTION
CANNES CLASSICS
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

A Journey Through French Cinema

a film by
**BERTRAND
TAVERNIER**

A Journey Through French Cinema

a film by
**BERTRAND
TAVERNIER**



OFFICIAL SELECTION
CANNES CLASSICS
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

A JOURNEY THROUGH FRENCH CINEMA

a film by **Bertrand Tavernier**

France – 2016

Duration: 3 hours 15 minutes

GAUMONT
30, avenue Charles de Gaulle
92200 Neuilly sur Seine
Tel. : 01 46 43 20 00



INTERNATIONAL PRESS GAUMONT
Ariane Toscan du Plantier – atoscan@gaumont.fr
Sophie Bollotte – sbollotte@gaumont.fr

"I had the opportunity to see Bertrand Tavernier and share his very personal approach to French cinema, his French cinema. He has made an extremely precise and detailed film about Jacques Becker, Marcel Carné, music in the French cinema of the 30s, Jean Renoir and so many other filmmakers. It is a remarkable work, made with great intelligence. It is enlightening about classic French cinema, and about many forgotten or neglected filmmakers. It is a very precious work."

You are convinced that you know all that by heart, until Tavernier comes along to reveal to us the pure beauty of it all."

MARTIN SCORSESE



"Working as a citizen, a spy, an explorer and painter, a chronicler and adventurer, as it is so well described by so many authors, from Casanova to Gilles Perrault... isn't that a fine definition of the job of a filmmaker? That one would like to apply to Renoir, Becker, the Vigo of L'ATALANTE, Grangier, Gréville or Sacha, who, in a scene or film, illumine an emotion, or uncover surprising truths. I would like this film to be an expression of gratitude to all those filmmakers, screenwriters, actors and musicians who have erupted into my life. Memory keeps us warm: this film is a piece of glowing charcoal for a winter night."

BERTRAND TAVERNIER

BERTRAND TAVERNIER

HOW CAN I ANALYZE OR COMMENT ON WHAT IS IN ITSELF AN ANALYSIS, A COMMENTARY...

Forewarning filmmakers that they do not appear in it is like giving them a stick to beat you with... Explaining that we did not use A LEGIONNAIRE because of material issues, and that we have replaced it with MACAO? It is hard to talk about how the film was elaborated, gradually illumined, how it took on this shape and not another, took on its own life as we mulled over excerpts, grappled with material problems, with issues of rights (which obliged me to explore new routes, and required numerous rewrites)? But should I be the one to write that? Or someone like Emmanuelle Sterpin (First Assistant Director and researcher), or Guy Lecorne (editor), who can testify to our absence of blinders and prejudices, to our frank sincerity? And also to our busts of enthusiasm.

YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT FRENCH CINEMA, AND SO YOU KNEW IN ADVANCE WHICH AUTHORS YOU WOULD HAVE TO ELIMINATE, AND THOSE WHOSE PRAISES YOU WERE GOING TO SING?

Well no, I admit humbly, no. I explored, looked again, discovered, and I let films and filmmakers impose themselves, find their own space. One name led to another. Carné conjured up Jaubert and Renoir, Kosma.

Yes, I obviously knew that I would declare my admiration for Renoir, Becker, and Gabin, and all of a sudden my friend Edmond T. Gréville popped up, and Jean Sacha. And then that film by Grangier, with its extraordinary autobiographical stroke of lightning.

Showing that, with filmmakers who are so very different, we still find the same passion, the same





desire to experiment, the same respect for the public, and the same desire to treat them like adults. And reacting as a filmmaker myself to what touches me in films, by very different auteurs, evoking the depth of a Renoir frame, the way Carné appropriates a splendid dramaturgical idea of Trauner's, the influence of Welles on Jean Sacha. I can identify with Greville's stupefaction at an actor's demand (to play a legless cripple), that could perturb the entire shoot.

I want this to be lively and fun, to awaken the desire to see hundreds of films again. I want to show the intransigence that we find in filmmakers who are so very different from each other: Carné in *LE JOUR SE LÈVE*, but also in the Delannoy of *MACAO*, of *SAVAGE TRIANGLE*, and in certain frames of *THIS MAN IS DANGEROUS*.

I want to convey a sense of the creative verve that existed at 9, rue Kepler. I rubbed shoulders there for more than three years with Varda, Demy, Godard, Chabrol, Schoendoerffer, Rozier. To sketch a portrait of Melville, who with Claude Sautet was my godfather in the cinema. Of Melville and the studios in the Rue Jenner. Blessed are those who discovered cinema in those studios.

A MEMORY

It was on set at the Studio Jenner. The set was completely empty, except for some huge photographic enlargements of American façades that were going to be used as the view from the windows in *THE DOULOS*.

And in front of those buildings and fire escapes, Jean-Pierre Melville and I spoke about Cocteau, and I can still hear him say to me: "Cocteau was first and foremost what every French creator should be: a French ambassador to France".

A magnificent statement that I would like to use in this *JOURNEY THROUGH FRENCH CINEMA*, this exercise in admiration and gratitude. As Victor Hugo once said, in admiration there is a *je ne sais quoi* of consolation.

BERTRAND TAVERNIER



A JOURNEY IN MUSIC(S)

by STÉPHANE LEROUGE

“Cinema, deaf and dumb at birth, as Tristan Bernard once said, has never treated musicians well. In France, we are still waiting for a recorded anthology of Van Parys, Cloërec, Auric, Honegger, Duhamel. It took Truffaut for us to be able to listen to the music composed by Maurice Jaubert for *L'ATALANTE*. Unfortunately, all the other works of this composer have disappeared.” These lines published by Bertrand Tavernier as liner notes for the 33 1/3 rpm recording of “Spoiled Children” date back to 1977. Because the filmmaker is also a music-lover keen on music(s) in the plural, and who has always fought for recognition and appreciation of the composers of French cinema. And most notably for the constellation of musicians put on early retirement by the French New Wave. Nevertheless, Van Parys, Wiener or Kosma were stars in their time, but their memory has faded gradually with the passage of time, the dearth of phonographic releases, and the passing of generations. Like an image that fades away and vanishes. That is precisely what Bertrand Tavernier has been fighting against day by day: eroding memory.

In the course of the various projects we have worked on together (anthologies of music from his films, conferences), I have always been struck by Bertrand's single-minded curiosity about the input of the composer. Especially as regards one decisive aspect: how music affects the image, transforms and completes its meaning, how composing a score can be tantamount to rewriting the film. Free of any prejudices, Tavernier is enthralled by musicians of all languages and generations; he tries to determine what they have in common and what separates them, as he attempts to

ascertain their aesthetic singularities. In a way, those years of activism, research and reflection on the French school of film music today reaches the finish line with *A JOURNEY THROUGH FRENCH CINEMA*. That is, by the way, one of the original features of this documentary: for the first time, it elevates composers to a level worthy of their contributions, and presents them in relation to their directors. From a sensitive evocation of Vigo, Tavernier segues into a look at his musical double, Jaubert, and his tragic fate. With great intelligence, he shows how the cinema has turned the careers of certain artists upside down, by encouraging them to explore virgin territory: the series reveals that Henri Sauguet, a trained symphonist, became an astounding songwriter in *LES AMOUREUX SONT SEULS AU MONDE*. And just the opposite, Paul Misraki, the composer of Ray Ventura's greatest hits, discovered and explored the art of scoring for orchestra thanks to Decoin, Becker and Chabrol. The common denominator between those composers is that certain distance they take from the image, unlike the Hollywood approach, according to which the score highlights each detail of the action. And also, as Tavernier likes to emphasize, a fondness for solo timbres, from the harmonica of *TOUCHEZ PAS AU GRISBI* to the trumpet in *FRANTIC*, or the guitar in *FORBIDDEN GAMES*. In short, this *JOURNEY* is at one and the same time a tribute and a celebration, or better yet, a hymn to the musicians of French cinema. Many of them are illustrious unknowns. Tavernier trains his spotlight on this army of shadows.

Ultimately, insofar as music is concerned, *A JOURNEY THROUGH FRENCH CINEMA* is also parsed in the

present tense. Benoît Jacquot, Volker Schlöndorff and Henry Selick's sidekick, Bruno Coulais, here scores his first original soundtrack for Bertrand Tavernier. Lyrical, modern, and rhythmically virtuosic, his score comforts the idea of a look taken today at the past. Slipping some of his own notes in between Henri Dutilleux or Jacques Ibert's, Coulais willingly embodies a long tradition. One of his masters is Georges Delerue, himself a disciple of Maurice Jaubert, a film music pioneer. Jaubert-Delerue-Coulais: a chain is taking shape. They all share the same credo: "Music, like cutting, editing, set design, and direction must help make clear, logical, and true the great story that each film is meant to be. And all the better, if discreetly, it contributes some additional poetry: it's own." Who is the author of that profession of faith? It could be Bruno Coulais in 2016. But hold on: it was Maurice Jaubert in 1936.

A specialist in film music, Stéphane Lerouge is the creator of the collection "Écoutez le cinéma!" from Universal Music (125 catalogue entries since 2000).





TECHNICAL LIST

Pathé and Gaumont present

A film written and directed by Bertrand TAVERNIER

**And in collaboration with Jean OLLE-LAPRUNE
Stéphane LEROUGE**

Produced by Frédéric BOURBOULON

Original music composed and orchestrated by Bruno COULAIS

Texts read by André MARCON

**Editor Guy LECORNE
Assisted by Juliette ALEXANDRE
Mathilde FORISSIER**

**And Marie DEROUILLÉ
Assisted by Emmanuel JEGO
Maxence LOUBEYRE**

First Assistant Director and Researcher Emmanuelle STERPIN

Graphic Design François GODERNIAUX

**Camera Jérôme ALMERAS
Simon BEAUFILS
Julien PAMART
Camille CLEMENT
Garance GARNIER**

**Sound Fanny WEINZAEPFLEN
Olivier DO HUU**

**Production Clément TREHIN-LALANE
Mathieu HAVOUDJIAN
Cyprien PREVOST**

**A Coproduction Little Bear
Gaumont
Pathé Production**

**With the participation of CANAL +
CINE +
SACEM**

**And the support of Région Ile de France
in partnership with the CNC**