

European 60s

Breathless 1960

(À bout de souffle)

Friday, May 9 - Thursday, May 15, 2008



Film Information

Directed by

Jean-Luc Godard

Language

French with English subtitles

Running Time

90 minutes

Film Notes

Released in 1960, one year after Francois Truffaut's game-changing *THE 400 BLOWS*, Jean Luc-Godard's *BREATHLESS* made positively clear that a new beginning for French cinema was here. In his book "The French New Wave: An Artistic School," film scholar Michel Marie, referring specifically to *BREATHLESS*, called Godard "the most innovative New Wave director, exploring all the possible avenues for cinematic expression." Legendary critic Pauline Kael credited Godard, and in particular his first film, as one of the medium's most influential moments: "The most gifted younger directors and student filmmakers all over the world recognize his liberation of the movies; like James Joyce, he is both kinds of master—both innovator and artist. Godard has already imposed his way of seeing on us; we look at cities, at billboards and brand names, at a girl's hair different because of him."

Conversations about *BREATHLESS* inevitably come to the film's revolutionary camera-work and editing, marked by its pioneering usage of "jump cuts." To this day, the film feels as loose and fresh and spontaneous as ever. Although Godard shared a certain philosophy

about cinema with Truffaut, and even co-wrote the film with him, the stylistic differences between the two directors was apparent from the very start. (Their philosophical differences would begin to reveal themselves, with increasing nastiness, soon enough).

It would be a crime to mention *BREATHLESS* (or Godard for that matter) without also mentioning the iconic Jean-Paul Belmondo, who would reunite with the director five years later for *PIERROT LE FOU*. That film plays later in this series, and if you catch it, you might hear a piece of dialogue it playfully shares with this one, a line with leftist origins that the always political Godard embraced and made his own: "We are all dead men on leave."

—Casey



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“When we talked, I talked about me,
you talked about you, when we should
have talked about each other.”

More Information

Written by

Jean-Luc Godard
François Truffaut

Featuring

Jean-Paul Belmondo
Jean Seberg
Daniel Boulanger
Jean-Pierre Melville
Henri-Jacques Huet

Cinematography by

Raoul Coutard

Original Music by

Martial Solal

Film Editing by

Lila Herman
Cecile Decugis

Country of Origin

France

“We at *Cahiers [du Cinéma]* always considered ourselves future directors. Going to ciné-clubs and the Cinémathèque was already thinking the cinema and thinking about the cinema. Writing was already making cinema because between writing and filming there is only a quantitative difference, not a qualitative one.”

—Jean-Luc Godard

Also Recommended, by Godard

Band of Outsiders 1964
Alphaville 1965
Pierrot le fou 1965
Weekend 1967
La Chinoise 1967