



Jean-Pierre Melville: An American in Paris

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Ginette Vincendeau discusses the artistic value of his films in their proper context and comments on Jean-Pierre Melville's love of American culture and his controversial critical and political standing in this English language study.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

One of the most brilliant filmmakers in post-war France and world cinema, Jean-Pierre Melville now enjoys renewed popularity. His "Bob le flambeur" (with its street-wise Montmartre and Pigalle settings, its cool jazz score and its good-humoured tale of gangster clans) not only inspired the New Wave but has attained unassailable cult status. Other iconic gangster films such as "Le Doulos", "Le Samourai" and "Le Cercle rouge" are now hailed as masterpieces by latter-day legends John Woo and Quentin Tarantino. Meanwhile, with "Le Silence de la mer" and "L'Armee des ombres", Melville also contributed two of the greatest films about the Resistance during World War II. This major study of Jean-Pierre Melville discusses the artistic value of the films in their context and the director's love of American culture from which he derived his name, his sartorial style of Stetson hat and dark glasses, and his ambition to rework the Hollywood gangster film in French settings. The author looks at Melville's controversial critical and political standing, his extraordinary focus on masculinity and male stars such as Alain Delon, Jean-Paul Belmondo and Lino Ventura and his trademark "pared-down" mise-en-scene. This critical account by a leading writer on French cinema, Ginette Vincendau, reveals the director to be not only a fashionable cult director but one of the few true masters of the cinema.

About the Author

Ginette Vincendeau is Professor of Film Studies at the University of Warwick. She is the author or editor of numerous publications including The Encyclopedia of European Cinema, Stars and Stardom in French Cinema, Pepe le Moko and (with Alastair Phillips), the forthcoming Journeys of Desire: European Actors in Hollywood.

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