
LUMIÈRE D'ÉTÉ

This drama is that of two worlds that contrast and clash: one of comedy – represented by idleness, individualism, lying and jealousy – and the other of sincerity, work and naïveté, embodied by the other characters.

Carole Aurouet, on the subject of *Summer Light* in Jacques Prévert, *portrait d'une vie*

One does not create night with a blue toning. Night is a movement. It is a solution of light in which we behave differently. It is a wrenching, a point of our solitude, a state of calm, an anguish, a wait or expectation, a ray of peace that invades our heart, our mind. It is never a colour.

Jean Grémillon, 'Propositions', in *Comœdia*, no.4723, 27 November 1925

Jean Grémillon occupies a special place in the history of La Cinémathèque française. He was invited by Henri Langlois to become a member of the association in 1943, then president the following year. In addition to the filmmaker's important, committed presence within La Cinémathèque for nearly fifteen years, Jean Grémillon's silent pictures were programmed quite regularly, constituting the heyday of the Avenue de Messine and the first foundations of Langlois programming. But Jean Grémillon's contemporary work was not outdone, and as of 1947, La Cinémathèque française wanted to acquire elements of the film *Summer Light*. Henri Langlois carried out the duplication of two 16mm prints and preserved precious documents concerning the writing of the film and its promotion (original documents pertaining to the script, photographs, posters and distribution documents).

The shooting of *Summer Light* began in the summer of 1942, on the banks of the Dordogne at the site of the Aigle dam under construction in the Corrèze region; this would later be called the 'resistance dam'. Shooting lasted until January 1943. In addition to production difficulties, severe censorship instructions, and names deleted from the credits (thus Alexandre Trauner's name does not appear alongside those of Léon Barsacq and Max Douy), *Summer Light* underwent an equally rough theatrical release, very poorly received by the public. However, the reviews were - and rightly so - encouraging, and thanks to its selection by the Biarritz Festival of Cursed Films in 1949, the film enjoyed a new life in *ciné-clubs* and film archives, most probably charmed by the poetic realism of the dialogues by Jacques Prévert and Pierre Laroche and the acting of Madeleine Renaud, Pierre Brasseur, Julien Marchal and Madeleine Robinson.

In homage to Jean Grémillon, Henri Langlois wrote¹ :

Jean Grémillon was not only this director about whom it was whispered in 1937 that he was the hope of his generation, the man who was going to give us Summer Light and The Sky is Yours, and this extraordinary The Sixth of June at Dawn. He was also the president who arrived at a moment when no one else – we have since realized – could have done what he did for the Cinémathèque, at the time when he took it and safeguarded it.

¹ Henri Langlois, *Écrits de cinéma*, texts collected by Bernard Benoliel and Bernard Eisenschitz, Ed. Flammarion / Cinémathèque française, 2014

CINEMA AS A MEANS OF RESISTANCE

Programming
Thanks to Henri Langlois

Summer Light / Lumière d'été

France, 1943 – 112 minutes

Direction: Jean Grémillon

Script and dialogues: Jacques Prévert et Pierre Laroche

Assistant director: Serge Vallin

Production: André Paulvé

Photography: Louis Page

Set: Max Douy from the models of Léon Barsacq and Alexandre Trauner

Music: Roland Manuel

Cast: Madeleine Renaud, Madeleine Robinson, Josette Paddé, Paul Bernard, Pierre Brasseur, Georges Marchal, Marcel Levesque, Léonce Corné, Raymond Aimos, Charles Blavette, Henri Pons, Gérard Lecomte, Georges Yvon, Jeanne Marken

An idle squire, an alcoholic artist and an engineer fall in love with the same woman.



Jean Grémillon - DR



Lumière d'été, photographie de promotion, droits SNC

Summer Light was safeguarded from the original image and sound negatives in 1990. The SNC company, supported by La Cinémathèque française, restored the negatives and duplicated new preservation elements. In 2011 a 2K digitization of the restored elements was carried out by the Eclair laboratories.