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Hélas pour moi

Jean-Luc Godard

Switzerland/France, 1993

90 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Vega Film AG**
(Zurich)/Les films Alain Sarde (Paris)

Producer: **Ruth Waldburger**

Screenplay: **Jean-Luc Godard**

Cinematography: **Caroline Champetier**

Editor: **Jean-Luc Godard**

Sound: **Francois Musy, Pierre-Alain Besse**

Principal Cast: **Gérard Depardieu, Laurence Masliah, Jean-Louis Loka, Francois Germond, Anny Romand, Roland Blanche, Marc Betton**

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Jean-Luc Godard continues to be one of the great iconoclasts and essayists in the history of the cinema. While others compromise and turn to the conventional, he firmly retains his independence and pursues a singular path of investigation into both the nature of the world, and of cinema.

Godard has become more and more spiritual over the years. His move to Switzerland has obviously aided this process. While sixties Godard was relentlessly urban and Parisian in subject and setting, his films since *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* (79) have been marked by a growing fascination with the ineffable and inexplicable in nature. If the early work was insistent and marked by commentary, his more recent work is certainly more resigned, spiritual and lyrical.

Hélas pour moi is inspired by the *Canti* texts of the great 19th-century Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi, who exposes the permanent distress of a creator confronted with the numerous misfortunes of mankind. It is also based on the Greek legend of Amphytrion and Alcimedes, and the gods' wish to feel in touch with the reality of human desire. The questions asked in the film are: Where does love between a man and a woman begin? How does it lead to creation? And why does it almost always end in quarrels, tears, bloodshed and war? With the

brilliant but restless Godard, the metaphysical inquiry is as searching as it has always been: it is in his quest, however, that Godard's genius makes for inspired filmmaking.

■ **Piers Handling**

Jean-Luc Godard

was born in Paris in 1930. While studying ethnology at the Sorbonne, his passion for cinema led him to André Bazin, Francois Truffaut, Jacques Rivette, and Claude Chabrol, with whom he would form the Nouvelle Vague. His first feature film, *A bout de souffle* (Breathless), made on a shoe-string budget, caused a sensation when it was released in 1959 and catapulted him to the forefront of international cinema. Feature films include *Une femme et une femme* (61), *Le petit soldat* (63), *Alphaville* (65), *Masculine feminine* (66), *Week-end* (67), *Un film comme les autres* (68), *Pravda* (69), *Vladimir et Rosa* (71), *Letter to Jane: Investigation of A Still* (72), *Numero Deux* (75), *Every Man For Himself* (80), *Passion* (83), *First Name: Carmen* (83), *Hail Mary* (85), *Detective* (85), *King Lear* (87), *Aria* (87), *Nouvelle Vague* (90), *Allemagne Neuf Zero* (91), and *Hélas pour moi* (93).

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