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March 4, 1956

CHRONIQUE D'UN ETE / *Los Angeles Premiere*
(Chronicle of a Summer)

France, 1961

Directed by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin.

In Europe, the director-ethnologist Jean Rouch is considered among the most important directors working today in the realm of the semi-documentary. Yet no major film which he has made has had American distribution until the recent release of *Chronique d'un été*.

Because this is a non-commercial film in the best sense of the word, viewers are not likely to see it even in the most dedicated art house. It is the type of film which must be shown in a specialized screening, but which should and must be seen if we are to understand anything of the new movements in Europe.

The film begins with the director interviewing people in a Paris street, asking them "Are you happy?" This sets off a variety of answers and reactions. Later, the same people are asked back to a showing of the edited material, and they comment on it. Never fear that this material is dull! Far from it. Rouch and Morin have selected about as interesting a group of people as it would be possible to find anywhere, and their comments on life in general verge from the touching to the most chilling.

The film is edited to keep the pace rapid, and filled with the tensions of everyday. It is a raw slice of life, and yet again it isn't. Rouch doesn't give us any answers to the questions which he poses, but he supplies ample food for thought. Somehow, the picture is extremely entertaining in addition to being an illuminating human experience. It is a film of contradictions, a film of puzzles, a film which reflects life as well as anything that has ever been put on celluloid. We urge you to see it while it is available, for one can be certain it will not be widely shown.