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**BAND ON THE RUN** Crooks Frey, left, and Brasseur take Karina for a ride.

### ***Band of Outsiders***

**Dir. Jean-Luc Godard. 1964. N/R.**

**97mins. In French, with subtitles.**

**Anna Karina, Sami Frey, Claude Brasseur, Danièle Girard.**

**O**lder film buffs have a tendency—one that younger film buffs find endearing and irritating in equal measure—to romanticize the '60s, remembering it as a time when urban audiences flocked to the great foreign-language movies in comparative droves. A little investigation, however, confirms that such recollections are more than a little bit rose-colored. *Band of Outsiders*, Jean-Luc Godard's idiosyncratic homage to the American gangster movies of his childhood, will very likely have a longer and more profitable run at Film Forum this summer than it did upon its initial New York release in March 1966; according to a footnote in Pauline Kael's *For Keeps*, it lasted exactly one week. However sophisticated and adventurous they may have been, the Gothamites of four decades past apparently failed to appreciate the film's formal dexterity and tonal incongruity; we should feel grateful to be given a second chance.

Simultaneously playful, lethargic

and despairing, *Band of Outsiders* both celebrates and debunks the iconic glamour of classic Hollywood archetypes. Franz (Frey) and Arthur (Brasseur), aspiring hoods who seem to have picked up their moves and attitudes from various Warner Bros. programmers, persuade Odile (the radiant Karina) to help them burgle a wealthy lodger in the villa where she lives. The crime, when it finally occurs, goes spectacularly wrong; that's hardly surprising, however, since the trio spend the vast majority of the film goofing around like carefree adolescents: dancing the Madison in the middle of a café, observing an impromptu moment of silence (Godard cuts out the soundtrack entirely for the duration), pointing cocked fingers at each other and saying, "bang bang." So nonchalantly disaffected is their behavior, in fact, that their plans for the robbery feel like just another lark; it's genuinely surprising—and oddly disturbing—when they actually go through with it. Ostensibly based on a novel, the film positively throbs with Godard's singular brand of cynical wit; let's not be quite so dismissive this time. (Opens Fri; Film Forum. See also the *Hot Seat*, page 152.)—Mike D'Angelo