

Document Citation

Title	Elena et les hommes
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Source	<i>Contemporary Films/McGraw-Hill</i>
Date	
Type	distributor materials
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Éléna et les hommes (Elena and her men), Renoir, Jean, 1956



Elena et les Hommes

(1956)

(Elena and the Men)

Direction and Screenplay by Jean Renoir. Adaptation and Dialogue by Jean Renoir and Jean Serge. Photographed by Claude Renoir. Set Designs by Jean Andre. Costumes by Rosine Delamare, Monique Plotin. Music by Joseph Kosma. Edited by Boris Lewin. Produced by Franco London Films/Films Gibe/Electra Compania Cinematografica. With Ingrid Bergman, Jean Marais, Mel Ferrer, Jean Richard, Magali Noel, Juliette Greco, Gaston Modot, Albert Remy, Pierre Bertin. French with English subtitles.

In 1946, Ingrid Bergman asked Jean Renoir to make a film for her. It took ten years for Renoir to find the proper vehicle for Miss Bergman, and the result is a film about the power of love, the power of women, the folly of progress, the beauty of laziness, and the evil of dictators—all combined in a style that Renoir calls “une fantaisie musicale.”

The original idea for the film was quite serious: General Boulanger's bid for dictatorial power in the 1880's. But Renoir soon strayed from historical authenticity, and instead turned to “a freer, more lighthearted approach.” Princess Elena (Ingrid Bergman) is a Polish princess living in Paris, who toys with the idea of gaining power through the Minister of War, General Rollan (Jean Marais). She is at first willing to give up her true lover, the elegant Henri de Chevincourt (Mel Ferrer), but in the end love conquers all and Elena returns to Henri and gives up her vicarious quest for power.

“ELENA ET LES HOMMES has much in common with the previous (Renoir) films . . . It also bears some resemblance to LA REGLE DU JEU in that it is a comedy of manners with chateau-set scenes of amorous interchange of partners among the rich and their servants . . .

“The characteristic elements of the later Renoir are all here: color and movement, good humour spilling over into awkward farce and a wildly satirical look at the rich and ambitious . . .”—Roy Armes, FRENCH CINEMA SINCE 1946, Volume I

Code 408406 — 98 minutes — Color

Rental: \$60 (Classroom)

\$100 (Announced or admission charged*)

Also available in 35 mm.