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Author(s)	Tom Milne
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ELENA ET LES HOMMES

"For a long time I had been dying to make something gay with Ingrid Bergman", Renoir explains, "I wanted to see her laughing and smiling on the screen"—and she plays a Polish princess in this prancing ballet of love amid the military manoeuvres and Quatorze Juillet carnivals of France in the 1880s. There were difficulties with the international cast, and the critics at the time pronounced it uneven (or worse). As always with Renoir, though, the question is not whether it works, but whether one loves it. One does.—Tom Milne. *France/Italy, 1956. Franco-London/Gibe/Electra. Director: Jean Renoir. With Ingrid Bergman, Jean Marais, Mel Ferrer. Technicolour.*