

# Breathless (Members' Choice)

Director: Jean-Luc Godard. France, 1960. 90 min. (15)

With: Jean Seberg, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Daniel Boulanger, Henri-Jaques Huet, Roger Hanin, Liliane Dreyfus and Van Doude



A classic of the French New Wave, *A Bout de Souffle (Breathless)* was Godard's debut feature film, a career breakthrough for Belmondo and a career recovery for Seberg after her travails in Otto Preminger's *Saint Joan* and *Bonjour Tristesse*.

The plot is pure pulp. Despite the heavy intellectualising over the years, the film is best seen as an exercise in cinematic style, which went on to influence works as diverse as Woody Allen's *Play It Again, Sam*, Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* and Terence Malick's *Badlands*, not to mention the entire oeuvre of Scorsese and Tarantino. That it should have such an influence on American directors is an ironic tribute to a film inspired by American gangster movies and what would come to be known in the 1970s as *film noir*.

## There will be a post-screening Q&A with Professor Peter Evans of QMUL

*"As sordid as is the French film ...—and sordid is really a mild word for its pile-up of gross indecencies—it is withal a fascinating communication of the savage ways and moods of some of the rootless young people of Europe (and America) today"* Bosley Crowther, *New York Times* (1961)

*"Here in one quick, sure move, knowing somehow just what he wanted and how to obtain it, he achieved a turning point in the cinema just as surely as Griffith did with "The Birth of a Nation" and Welles with "Citizen Kane."*" Roger Ebert (2003)

*"Breathless" is a pop artifact and a daring work of art, made at a time when the two possibilities existed in a state of almost perfect convergence. That is the source of its uniqueness.*" A.O. Scott, *New York Times* (2010)

**Berlin International Film Festival: Silver Bear (best director); French Syndicate of Cinema Critics: best film; Prix Jean Vigo: best feature film; Golden Goblets (Italy): Golden Cup**

Please rate the film out of 5\* (5 = top score) at the screening room door as you leave.

Comments on the film welcome via: Twitter @wfc screenings; Instagram @wimbledonfilm; Facebook Wimbledon Film Club; or email [info@wimbledonfilmclub.com](mailto:info@wimbledonfilmclub.com)

Please dispose of these notes yourself or take them with you. Thank you.