

GAUMONT DISTRIBUTION présente une Production "LES FILMS DE LA PLEIADE"

UN FILM DE
FRANÇOIS REICHENBACH



L'AMÉRIQUE INSOLITE
L'AMÉRIQUE VUE
PAR UN FRANÇAIS

PRODUIT PAR
PIERRE BRAUNBERGER

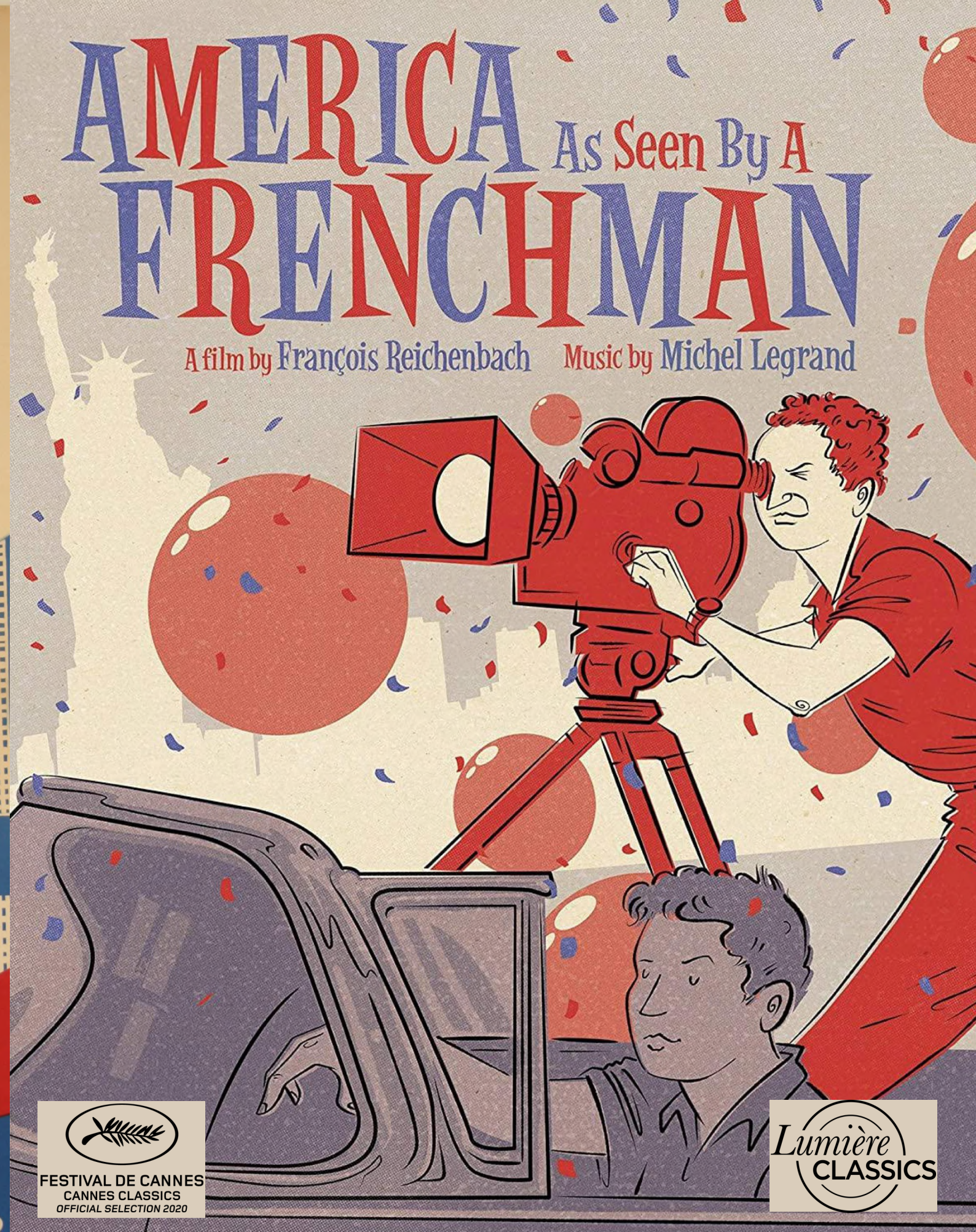
Musique de MICHEL LEGRAND • Editions MICHEL LEGRAND • Editions ROYALTY • DISQUES PHILIPS

EN DYALISCOPE ET EN COULEURS



AMERICA As Seen By A FRENCHMAN

A film by François Reichenbach Music by Michel Legrand



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
CANNES CLASSICS
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2020



New Scan 4K and 2K digital restoration

LES FILMS DU JEUDI

LES FILMS DE LA PLEIADE





CREW

Directed by	François Reichenbach
Produced by	Pierre Braunberger (Les Films de la Pléiade)
Photographed by	François Reichenbach Jérôme Sutter Jean-Marc Ripert Et Marcel Grignon
Written by	François Reichenbach from a first version by Chris Marker
Edited by	Albert Jurgenson Claudine Merlin Eva Zora Bill Flores
Assistant Director	Roger Fleytoux
Production manager	Michel Legrand
Music by	

Running time	90 minutes
Aspect ratio	2:35:1
Audio	Mono
	Colour
Scan	4K
Restoration	2K



CREDITS

Restored by	Les Films de la Pléiade
In collaboration with	Les Films du Jeudi
With the support of	Centre National du Cinéma et de l’Image animée (CNC)
Booklet produced by	Les Films du Jeudi
From an artwork designed by	Ignatius Fitzpatrick
For	Arrow

SPECIAL THANKS

Francesco Simeoni, Kevin Lambert



LES FILMS DU JEUDI

HERITAGE FILMS
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Les Films du Jeudi is a company founded in 1964 by Pierre Braunberger (1905 – 1990). He was Jean Renoir's producer but also produced the first films of Jean-Pierre Melville, Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais, Jacques Rivette, François Reichenbach, Jean Rouch and Chris Marker, among many others.

Since 1991, Laurence Braunberger manages the company, focusing on preservation, restoration and diffusion of what is now one of the major independent film catalogues in France (120 features and 250 shorts).

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About the film

« I wanted to film the American citizen, from birth to death, in all the comical, absurd and unusual circumstances of his life...I wanted to show his extraordinary youth, his passions, his taste for violence, his dramas, his friendliness and his idiosyncrasies. I wanted to be a curious, untiring even indiscreet observer. But I never allowed myself to be judgmental »

- François Reichenbach

America as seen by a Frenchman

"I just wanted to show America with both its strict rules and its indulgence, its meticulous habits, its good faith, its eternal desire for youth and freedom without which a film like this could not be made". Thus begins François Reichenbach's first feature-length documentary, *L'Amérique insolite*, (*America as seen by a Frenchman*), made in 1960.

Impressed with Reichenbach's early amateur films, producer Pierre Braunberger first sent him to the US to direct a short, *Impressions of New York*. Delighted with the result, he then entrusted the filmmaker with his very first feature-length project: *America as seen by a Frenchman*. Its singular tone and approach led to its selection by the Cannes Film Festival to represent France in 1961. Owed to the Cannes exposure, Reichenbach's work was finally recognized but did not garner any award, which Jean-Cocteau loudly deplored at the time. A year later, however, it will win the prize for best documentary at the San Francisco Film Festival.

The film stands out for its unique and inimitable style.

In the United States, François Reichenbach discovered the technical innovations of "direct cinema" which allowed him to take his camera everywhere, capturing unexpected micro-events of American life.

Questioned in 1963 by the magazine *Artsept* about his thoughts on "cinéma-vérité" (expression coined at the release of *Chronicle of a summer* in 1961 for its free-wheeling and direct interviews) François Reichenbach calls his own approach "cinéma-aventure". And indeed the film, enhanced by a voice-over commentary playing on comic and poetic counterpoints (originally written by Chris Marker but which Reichenbach re-wrote to make it its own) invites us through a surprising journey into the heart of America and its culture.



He offers to the viewer a true ethnographic point of view on the inhabitants of the other continent, without pretension or prejudice. By dwelling on the singular, the ordinary and the unique, Reichenbach accepts that he cannot see everything and is content with the few fragments of reality that he can grasp. He multiplies the comical situations, which are all the more amusing because they are not acted out, but also the more moving and lyrical moments, *America as seen by a Frenchman* is an immersion into the American culture of the 60s, which the film documents with acuity. Michel Legrand's score offers a travel log feel with humorous and offbeat tone. With his ambitious and innovative camera framing, Reichenbach is already establishing the offbeat approach which characterizes his work and which he will keep reinventing in his subsequent films.

It is undeniable that *America as seen by a Frenchman* occupies a special place in the field of French documentaries. François Reichenbach's work, kaleidoscopic, audacious and borderless, could never be reduced, like all avant-garde films, to any genre. Filmmaker Jacques Doniol-Valcroze writes about *America as seen by a Frenchman* "it is truly a "film d'auteur". Not just a documentary about the United States, it is foremost a document about Reichenbach himself, a self-portrait that has none of the faults of the genre (pretension, egocentricity, narcissism) since the mirror in which the filmmaker looks at himself does not reflect his own image first off, but rather that of the country and its inhabitants ; It is only in filigree - through his choice of scenes, gestures, shooting angles, colours, sounds and music that the features of a unique director appear throughout ; It is not America as seen by any Frenchman but seen by a director gifted with an acute sensitivity, subtle humour, tremendously artful touch, and an extraordinary talent which brings out the poetry of every-day life".

Brilliant, smart, always surprising the viewer by taking him where he doesn't expect it, *America as seen by a Frenchman* remains a reference point to understand what is documentary film making.

America as seen by a Frenchman was digitalized and restored thanks to the selective aid of the **CNC Directorate of film heritage for the digitalization of cinematographic works.**

HIVENTY

CNC

L'Amérique insolite
Is available for english-speaking areas distributed by

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LES FILMS DU JEUDI

