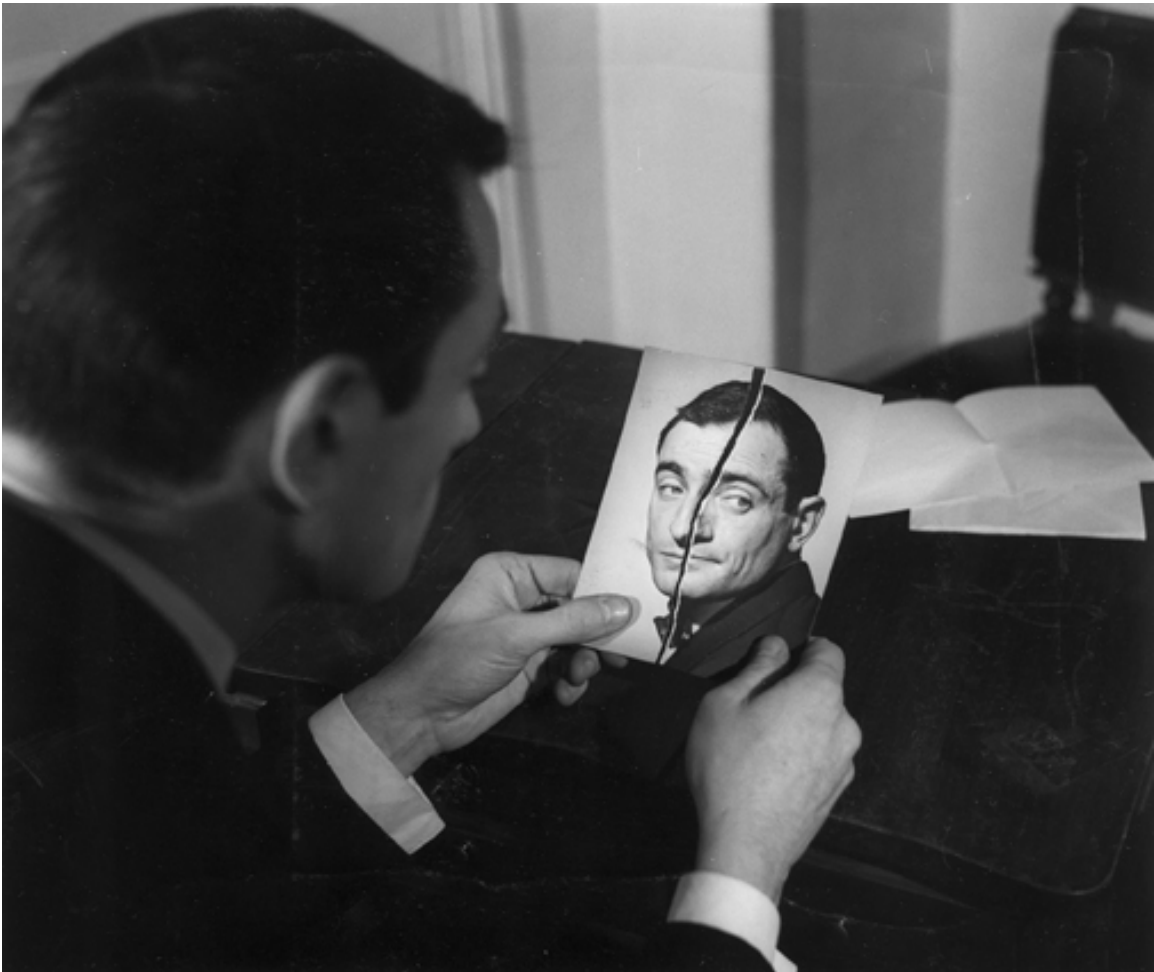


JANUS FILMS PRESENTS

*The Films of Pierre Étaix*



**FIVE FEATURES AND THREE SHORTS FROM THE LEGENDARY FRENCH  
COMIC AND DIRECTOR, ALL NEWLY RESTORED IN 35MM!**

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## THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

### PIERRE ÉTAIX: A BIOGRAPHY

Seduced by the circus at the age of five and inspired by Laurel & Hardy, Charlie Chaplin, and Harold Lloyd, Pierre Étaix has built his life and career around being a comic. He prepared for his craft by studying piano, violin, and accordion, and by creating characters inspired by the legendary European clowns Rhum, Bario, and Zavatta. But he didn't stop there: he also studied illustration and painting.

At sixteen, he made his debut as an august (the classic, white-faced clown) alongside a musician and a gymnast in a touring act. At seventeen, he joined an amateur theatre troupe in a stint that lasted for five years, during which he wrote sketches, built sets, performed musical numbers, and drew caricatures.

During this time he also earned a living as an illustrator. In September 1954, taking advantage of a working trip to Paris, Pierre requested an interview with Jacques Tati in order to ask his advice on a new stage number. His humorous drawings caught the attention of the filmmaker, with whom he spent four years working as a gagman and illustrator during pre-production on *Mon Oncle* (1958).

*"During the long gestation period of Mon Oncle, I was his illustrator, his assistant; that lasted for almost four years. He was the absolute opposite of a teacher in the usual sense of the word. But his presence, the example he set, his exigency, were all extremely stimulating. Every day he'd come up with something. It remains a wonderful memory ... [But] I had to leave, because I really had to work for myself; I had to earn a bit more money than he could afford (I was married and had a child)."*

Between 1958 and 1961, Étaix developed his eccentric clown act in cabarets and music halls. Appearing as an opening act for Johnny Hallyday, he performed a routine as a hapless musician that spoofed Jacques Brel, as well as other routines that followed the same theme: his character constantly falling victim to unfortunate incidents that put him in an awkward position.

In 1958, he illustrated the novel *Les vacances de Monsieur Hulot* (*M. Hulot's Holiday*), written by Jean-Claude Carrière. That same year he met Robert Bresson at Tati's production offices, who asked him to play the part of second assistant in his film *Pickpocket* (1959).

Next, a producer at Gray Film suggested that Étaix write and direct a short film. The project, shot in the studio, remained in test form. Étaix then decided to write and direct another short in 8mm, working closely with Jean-Claude Carrière. They continued their collaboration by writing the script for *Rupture*, a kind of eccentric clown style chamber piece.

In 1960, Tati asked Étaix to perform his mandolin number in the show *Jour de fête à l'Olympia*. The success of the number led producer Paul Claudon to seek a

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meeting with Pierre Étaix and persuade him to come up with some short film ideas. After working with Tati, Étaix felt comfortable moving into the director's chair to film *Rupture*. Of Tati's influence on his work as a filmmaker, he says:

*"What I got from him was the taste for work and for reflection. Tati would spend a long time working on a gag before deciding to include it in a film. Spontaneity is vital, but the idea must be allowed to ripen, be worked into a particular context, while one also tries to be the first viewer of one's own film."*

The day after shooting the film, Étaix presented his producer with the idea for a second short, *Hereux Anniversaire (Happy Anniversary)*. The film won the Oscar for Best Short Film, but despite this recognition, the producer had some reservations about making a feature. So Étaix worked with Carrière on a series of shorts starring the character from the previous two films.

*"Carrière and I quite simply wanted to tell the story of an awkward guy who doesn't know how to approach girls. As Paul Claudon was reluctant to produce a feature, we said: Let's make a film out of sequences that would work as so many short films in their own right."*

Paul Claudon finally agreed to produce a feature: *Le soupirant (The Suitor)* (1962), which won the Louis Delluc prize. Once again working with Jean-Claude Carrière, Étaix wrote and directed *Yoyo* (1965) and *Tant au'on a la santé (As Long as You're Healthy)* (1966). Shortly after the film's release, he embarked on an eight-month tour with the Bouglione circus.

He next made *Le Grand Amour* (1969), and, during the summer of 1969, *Pays de cocagne* (1971). This unconventional docu-essay, shot on Super-16mm, was condemned by the film industry for its melancholy depiction of France's consumerist society in the aftermath of May 68.

In 1971, he returned to his original vocation, touring for a season with the Pinder circus as a clown and performing with Annie Fratellini, who had appeared in *Le grand amour* and was now his wife. The same year, he accepted an offer from his friend Jerry Lewis to play the august clown Gustave in the unreleased film *The Day the Clown Cried*. He also worked on costume design for the film.

At the bequest of Jean Dessailly and Simone Valère, who wanted to save the Hèbertot theatre from bankruptcy and demolition, he wrote, directed, and performed the show *A quoi on joue* (1973). The show combined the projection of diaporamas with the first on-stage use of a video system, and received the Société des Auteurs Award. Étaix toured France with the show for a year.

In 1973, concerned with the growing scarcity of French circus artistes, Étaix and Fratellini decided to set up the Ecole Nationale de Cirque. He performed with her

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as a clown on tours with their own circus, until she decided to take on the management of the institution single-handedly.

Over the next several years, Étaix wrote a number of unproduced screenplays, shot a pilot for a television series, continued to work as an illustrator, and wrote his first stage play, *L'Age de Monsieur est avancé (Monsieur Is Getting Older)* (1985), which he also directed as a film for television.

In 1989, Étaix directed the first fiction film for the Omnimax format, *J'écris dans l'espace (I Write in Space)*, co-written again with Carrière. It is with this last work that his directorial career came to a halt. However, he did publish several books of writings and drawings, and accepted roles in Otar Iosseliani's *Gardens in Autumn* (2006) and Jean-Pierre Jeunet's *Micmacs* (2009).

At the end of January 2010, he returned to the stage in Bordeaux with his new music-hall show *Miousik Papillon*, in which he reappeared after forty years' absence as Yoyo. Most recently, he was seen as Dr. Becker in Aki Kaurismäki's *Le Havre* (2011).

## THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

### AN OVERLONG ABSENCE: RESTORING THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

*Before this restoration project, Pierre Étaix's films had not been available for over 20 years. By the early 1990s, their producer was no longer exploiting the rights, initiating a legal imbroglio that climaxed in 2004 when Étaix signed a deal with a distribution company to bring the films back to the public. Unfortunately, the company effectively buried the films, taking no action towards their restoration or distribution while claiming universal rights. In 2009, Étaix won a suit against the company, enabling him to reclaim ownership of his work with the support of the more than 50,000 signatories who submitted a petition to the French cultural minister demanding an end to the situation. After Étaix's triumph in court, the foundations Technicolor and Groupama Gan, the only two in France to cater to cinema, stepped in to begin restoration on his films.*

Our two foundations joined forces in order to preserve the world's film heritage. The first operation was restoring Jacques Tati's *M. Hulot's Holiday*. To do so, we first had to work out a charter of quality to provide a framework for our projects. We thus determined the conditions we deemed necessary to achieve this kind of operation. These were: respect for the filmmaker and the original film; complete restoration utilizing the negative; an obligation to deposit preserved masters as well as pristine prints in appropriate archival facilities; and, above all, to give the restored film the widest possible exposure.

Thanks to the success of our first venture with Hulot, we committed ourselves to both Pierre Étaix and the high standards described above. Though we understood that each restoration is specific, we didn't know how unique this one would be. The figures speak for themselves: the restoration of eight films – a complete oeuvre – and no fewer than 1000 pages of contractual documentation to resolve the years of legal problems that had made these films inaccessible.

The singularity of this project also, and above all, depended on our involvement with Pierre Étaix and those close to him. Pierre Étaix welcomed us with arms wide open into both his past and present. Interview followed interview, each revealing new aspects of a body of work that is unique: music hall, film, circus, magic, and Pierre's artistic world of drawings, posters, and installations.

For all these reasons and more, the restoration and release of the films of Pierre Étaix has proved to be a very particular project – and yet, it proceeded over many long months in an atmosphere of cheerfulness and regard. Finally, the project has reached fruition with the programming of *Le Grand Amour* at the Cannes Film Festival and the theatrical re-release of all the films.

Séverine Wemaere, *Head of Technicolor Foundation*  
Gilles Duval, *Head of Groupama Gan Foundation*

## THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

### ABOUT THE RESTORATION

The main objective in restoring Pierre Étaix's films was to make them available for viewing, after nearly twenty years' absence from the cinema screen. It involved restoring image and sound, both damaged over time from poor storage conditions, then producing not only new prints, but new preservation masters for long-term conservation.

Overall, the material – original negatives and reference prints – available for the restoration work was in poor physical condition. It exhibited the typical problems found in films from this period: dust, numerous scratches on both sides of the film stock, stains, defects, and deteriorating splices.

Work on the visuals began with both photochemical and digital treatment to restore the colors, formats, and versions of the films according to the wishes of Pierre Étaix, who supervised all the restoration work.

Digitization of the material enabled each film to be restored frame by frame, after which work could begin on grading, a key stage in this part of the process. Being able to carry out this work alongside the filmmaker is an enormous advantage in the restoration process, as it ensures fidelity to the original work.

The films in the retrospective were originally shot on 35mm, with the exception of *Land of Milk and Honey*, which was initially shot on 16mm reversal film. For this title we needed a better quality negative, and used a 35mm blow-up. Two of the films in the series were very badly deteriorated and required special work: *Le Grand Amour* and *As Long As You're Healthy*.

For *Le Grand Amour*, Pierre's first color film, the negative was in very poor condition, with torn images and sprocket damage. Work on the visuals used the interpositive and the original internegative, with particular attention paid to restoring the original color. The magnetic sound track, which was in an advanced state of vinegar syndrome, was used to restore the soundtrack, as well as sound recordings from the original production.

For *As Long As You're Healthy* we had to take the best elements from two different edits, one from 1966 and one from 1971. The version restored for 2010 uses the second, at the request of Pierre Étaix. The restoration work on this film was complicated for several reasons: the film is composed of four shorts, elements of which came from different generations; shots in color alternate with shots in black-and-white, and two aspect ratios were used to shoot the film, 1.66 and 1.85. Finally, given the impossibility of using the original elements, the film will be shown with a new title sequence recently created by the filmmaker.

## THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

The final special case was *Yoyo*, which had previously been restored in 2007. That entirely photochemical restoration was completed in 2010 through additional digital restoration work.

At the end of the process, the restoration produced two types of elements: negatives used for striking new prints, and new internegatives intended for long-term preservation.

At the request of the filmmaker, “prestige” prints, as well as the preservation negatives, will be deposited at the Cinémathèque Française for long-term conservation.

## THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

### INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-CLAUDE CARRIÈRE

It was with Étaix that I first got involved in film, back in 1958. We had done some tests in 8mm where the character that was to become the protagonist of *The Suitor* began to take shape. We wanted to have an idea of what we were looking for. But nobody at the time wanted to see this film. Then we were separated for more than two years when I had to do my military service, and I spent a fair amount of time in Algeria. We kept up a correspondence, looking for ideas and even writing scenarios by mail. When I came home [in March 1961], we immediately started to send short film scripts to producers, which were actually screenplays – I mean complete scripts, shooting scripts.

What was quite typical when working with Étaix is that we immediately write a shooting script. In this kind of visual film comedy, the effects have to be extremely precise and clear. Form is inseparable from content. When one of us tells the other an idea or a gag, he already has to do so in a scripted form, indicating what should be seen in close-up, if there is a camera movement, etc. It's absolutely indispensable. You can't describe a scene of visual comedy without technical details. That's where the originality of working with Étaix lies.

Late in 1961, after doing two shorts [*Rupture* and *Happy Anniversary*], we immediately went to work on the script for *The Suitor*; we wrote it during the winter of 1961-62 and the film was shot in the summer of 1962. So all of my first efforts as screenwriting were linked with Étaix; I learned the trade, if you can call it a trade – which I don't like to. I also took part in the preparation and the entire shoot of *The Suitor*, because a screenwriter shouldn't ignore the technical problems involved in the making of a film.

During the shooting of *The Suitor* (we had a very small budget), I think I performed all the film trades. We were so poor at the time that two weeks before shooting was due to start, in an old town house set for demolition, Pierre and I made the sets ourselves. There were the two of us, with tools and paint cans, building furniture, painting, fixing up a room as a set as best as we could. We didn't even have a grip to help us. Pierre had a better knowledge of film technique, while I discovered it entirely through hammer and nails.

I vaguely knew what a lens was, and during the shooting, I learned all the ropes as best as I could. I was even a boom operator, on both ends. Not to mention set dressing, props, all kinds of odd jobs. I was an actor too. Let's say, an extra. I think I had 14 appearances. That's quite typical. It's a known fact that screenwriters are often extras.

People sometimes ask me: "How do you manage to work with Buñuel, Louis Malle?" But for me doing the opposite seems impossible, I mean, not doing movies with just Buñuel, Louis Malle or Étaix. You mustn't lock yourself into a system. For instance, Étaix always refuses to make the same film, which would



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be the easy way out. Where are the similarities between *The Suitor* and *Yoyo*? His character, in particular, is never the same.

I must also say – something that's often said – that there are only two of us and if you remember the way Harold Lloyd, Keaton and the other silent actor-director comics of the time worked, there were teams of gagmen who furnished them with story ideas, and as part of these ideas, they looked for gags. There were 200 or 300 of these gagmen working for different comics and sometimes, for instance when someone brought Buster Keaton some gags he would say: "Very good, but it's not for me. It would be more suited to Lloyd." Or vice versa. Sure, if Étaix and I had people coming to us with gags, it would help tremendously, but we don't know any, and we'd wish there were much more people working in this profession. There's also the issue of money! We have to talk about it as little as possible but still mention it in passing. How would you pay people like that?

And, basically, we've gotten used to it. There are only two of us, that's not much, we often run into a wall over such and such an idea, we lack collaborators. But on another hand, this two-person solitude creates a kind of familiarity between us, an intimacy that has its charm. There are only two of us, but there are two of us, and some days we tell ourselves it's already a lot.

*Interviewed by Hubert Arnault, Image et Son, April 1968*

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## THE FILMS



**Rupture (1961)**  
**Happy Anniversary (1962)**  
**The Suitor (1962)**  
**Yoyo (1965)**  
**As Long As You're Healthy (1966)**  
**Feeling Good (1966/2010)**  
**Le Grand Amour (1969)**  
**Land of Milk and Honey (1971)**

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## RUPTURE



A man receives a breakup letter from his sweetheart, who sends him back his photo, in pieces. The pained lover decides to reply. Fountain pen, penholder, desk, stamps, paper and inkwell all contrive diabolically to thwart him. To top it off, the young man's rocking chair sends him flying out the window.

(France 1961 / B&W / 11 minutes / 35mm / Mono / 1.37)

### CREW

Screenplay  
Photography  
Music

Pierre Étaix & Jean-Claude Carrière  
Pierre Levent  
Jean Paillaud

THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY (Heureux Anniversaire)



A young woman sets the table for her wedding anniversary celebration. Her husband is stuck in Paris traffic. The few remaining errands he has to make only delay him more and more.

(France 1962 / B&W / 12 min / 35mm / Mono / 1.37)

### CAST

The Husband  
The Wife

Pierre Étaix  
Laurence Lignière

### CREW

Screenplay  
Photography  
Music

Pierre Étaix & Jean-Claude Carrière  
Pierre Levent  
Claude Stiermans

## THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

### THE SUITOR (Le Soupissant)



Obsessed by his scientific research, a kindhearted young Parisian from a good family suddenly gives up studying the stars at his parents' insistence and sets out to find a wife.

(France 1962 / B&W / 81 min / 35mm / Mono / 1.66)

#### CAST

The Young Man  
The Swedish Girl  
The Father  
Stella  
The Beautiful Woman  
The Mother

Pierre Étaix  
Karin Vesely  
Claude Massot  
France Amell  
Laurence Lignières  
Denise Péronne

#### CREW

Screenplay  
Director of Production  
Director of Photography  
Music  
Editing  
Set Design  
Sound

Pierre Étaix & Jean-Claude Carrière  
Paul Claudon  
Pierre Levent  
Jean Paillaud  
Pierre Gillette  
Raymond Tournon  
Jean Bertrand

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**YOYO**



The travels of a ruined millionaire and a horsewoman. Their son becomes a clown and restores their fortune.

(France 1965 / B&W / 96 min / 35mm / Mono / 1.66)

**CAST**

Yoyo/The Millionaire  
Isolina  
The Horsewoman  
Young Yoyo

Pierre Étaix  
Claudine Auger  
Luce Klein  
Philippe Dionnet

**CREW**

Screenplay  
Photography  
Music  
Editing  
Set Design

Pierre Étaix & Jean-Claude Carrière  
Jean Boffety  
Jean Paillaud  
Henri Lanoë  
Raymond Gabutti & Raymond  
Tournon

## THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

### AS LONG AS YOU'RE HEALTHY (Tant Qu'on a la Santé)



Pierre is a serious-minded young man with a lot of good will, but he doesn't feel comfortable in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Étaix's third feature, *As Long As You're Healthy* is comprised of sketches. It was first released in 1966 and centered on a protagonist who undergoes different situations. Five years later, Étaix reedited the film as he had initially conceived it, dividing it into four distinct episodes.

(France 1966 / B&W and Color / 65 min / 35mm / Mono / 1.66)

**FEATURING** – *Denise Péronne, Simone Fonder, Sabine Sun, Vera Valmont, Françoise Occipinti, Claude Massot, Dario Meschi, Emile Coryn, Roger Trapp, Alain Jeaney, Bernard Dimey, Ronert Blome, Jean Preston, Pongo, Lorient*

#### CREW

Screenplay  
Director of Photography  
Music  
Editing  
Set Design  
Sound

Pierre Étaix & Jean-Claude Carrière  
Jean Boffety  
Luce Klein & Jean Paillaud  
Henri Lanoë  
Jacques D'Ovidio  
Jean Bertrand

THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

## FEELING GOOD (En pleine forme)



This short was originally one of the sequences of *As Long As You're Healthy* in its 1966 version. In 1971, Pierre Étaix reedited the feature and removed this episode, which became a short, *Feeling Good*. In 2010, he decided to include it in the general reissue of his restored films.

(France 1966/2010 / B&W / 13 min / 35mm / Mono / 1.66)

**FEATURING** – *Jean Preston, Bocky, Randell, Roger Trapp, Robert Blome*

### CREW

Screenplay  
Director of Photography  
Music  
Editing  
Set Design  
Sound

Pierre Étaix  
Jean Boffety  
Luce Klein & Jean Paillaud  
Henri Lanoë  
Jacques D'Ovidio  
Jean Bertrand



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## LE GRAND AMOUR



Pierre is married to Florence. Everything is fine in their relationship and at work. Manager of his father-in-law's factory, he spends his days signing checks and his evenings watching TV. The years pass, monotonously, until a young new secretary arrives. He falls in love with her and starts to dream...

(France 1969 / Color / 87 min / Mono / 1.66)

### CAST

Pierre  
Florence  
Agnès  
M. Girard  
Jacques  
Secretary

Pierre Étaix  
Annie Fratellini  
Nicole Calfan  
Louis Maïs  
Alain Janey  
Micha Bayard

### CREW

Screenplay  
Directory of Photography  
Sound  
Music  
Set Design  
Editor

Pierre Étaix & Jean-Claude Carrière  
Jean Boffety  
Jean Bertrand  
Claude Stiermans  
Daniel Louradour  
Henri Lanoë

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## LAND OF MILK AND HONEY (Pays de Cocagne)



Just after May '68, Pierre Étaix discovers the French on holiday. He captures live scenes that he edits, producing a documentary with a burlesque construction.

(France 1971 / Color / 74 min / 16mm-to-35mm / Mono / 1.66)

### CREW

Scenario  
Director of Photography  
Editing  
Sound

Pierre Étaix  
Georges Lendi  
Michel Lewin & Raymond Lewin  
Paul Habans

# THE FILMS OF PIERRE ÉTAIX

## RESTORATION CREDITS

*The Complete Pierre Étaix, restored under the personal supervision of Pierre Étaix, has been conducted by*

**Studio 37**

**Fondation Technicolor pour le Patrimoine du Cinéma – Séverine Wemaere**  
**Fondation Groupama Gan pour le Cinéma – Gilles Duval**

**Restoration Coordination – François Ede**

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Digital restoration	Ronald Boullet
Digital restoration	Charlotte Quemy
2K Scan	Sébastien Guyot
Colorist	Bruno Patin

### LNF

Photochemical processing	Florence Paulin
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### SOFRESON

Sound restoration	Lionel Risler
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