



PRESS RELEASE:

New Restoration by STUDIOCANAL and the Cinémathèque française

LE QUAI DES BRUMES

**Directed by Marcel Carné
with Jean Gabin, Michèle Morgan, Michel Simon, Pierre Brasseur**

France 1938 | 91 mins | Cert PG

A BFI release

www.bfi.org.uk/releases

Release date: 4 May 2012

**Opening venues: BFI Southbank, Ciné Lumière, Curzon Renoir,
Filmhouse Edinburgh plus selected cinemas nationwide**

One of the most richly atmospheric films ever made, Marcel Carné's, darkly seductive thriller is an outstanding example of 'Poetic Realism', the Gallic precursor of American *film noir*.

In the shadowy port of Le Havre, Jean (Jean Gabin), an army deserter on the run, takes shelter in Panama's bar, an isolated shack on the water's edge. In this hideout of drifters and down-and-outs, Jean encounters world-weary artist Michel Krauss (Robert Le Vigan) who discourses on life, suicide and the hidden meanings of art. Then in walks Nelly (Michèle Morgan) - exuding mysterious allure in her transparent raincoat and beret (costumes by Coco Chanel). For Jean it's love at first sight: 'It's like in the movies,' he says, 'I see you and I like you.' Nelly too is smitten but she also has to deal with the perverted jealousy of her guardian (Michel Simon) and the lecherous attentions of Lucien (Pierre Brasseur), a petty gangster who is investigating the disappearance of one of his gang-members, Nelly's former lover.

The first of Carné's collaborations with poet-scriptwriter Jacques Prévert, **Le Quai des brumes** is also graced by the expressionistic photography of Eugen Schüfftan, the ingenious set designs of Alexandre Trauner and Maurice Jaubert's romantic, doom-laden score. The 34-year-old Jean Gabin was already the most bankable star in French cinema, while Michèle Morgan, just seventeen, was instantly hailed as the new Garbo. Their incendiary romantic pairing –

combining wistful tenderness with a remarkably frank eroticism – has since been compared with that of Bogart and Bergman in *Casablanca*.

Le Quai des brumes was based on a novel by Pierre Mac Orlan, published in 1927 and set in turn-of-the-century Montmartre. It was originally proposed to UFA as a German film (to be set in Hamburg), but Goebbels' propaganda department found it too dark and demoralising, so the rights were re-purchased by producer Grégor Rabinovitch. Even then, Prévert's script – which transposed the novel to a vaguely contemporary Le Havre - was subject to French military approval before filming could begin. On its release in May 1938 the film was a huge critical and commercial success, winning both the Grand Prix National du Cinéma français and the Prix Louis-Delluc. On the outbreak of war, however, it was banned for being 'immoral, depressing and detrimental to young people'. A spokesman for the Vichy government famously declared: 'If we have lost the war, it is because of *Quai des brumes*.' A re-release was permitted in January 1941.

Unsurprisingly - given the vicissitudes of political censorship – **Le Quai des brumes** has come down to us in various versions and with the original negative incomplete. For this new restoration by STUDIOCANAL and the Cinémathèque française, the original negative was cleaned, scanned in 2K and completed with footage from other sources to create a version that corresponds as closely as possible to the filmmakers' intentions. Released in UK cinemas on 4 May, this new restoration of **Le Quai des brumes** will enable filmgoers to relish in full the beauty of its richly imagined world.

For further information please contact:

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Notes to editors:

LE QUAI DES BRUMES is on release in UK cinemas from 4 May and plays at BFI Southbank as the centrepiece of the JEAN GABIN: Working Class Hero to Godfather season, which runs from 2 to 31 May.

LE QUAI DES BRUMES will be released by STUDIOCANAL on DVD on June 4, and Blu-ray on September 3. For further information please contact: John Scrafton on 020 7534 2700 or John.Scrafton@studiocanal.co.uk

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

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