

DANIEL  
AUTEUIL

ALAIN  
CHABAT



AND MARINA FOIS  
IS IN IT TWO!

HE'S NOT  
WEIRD,  
HE'S JUST NOT  
ALONE ...

CHEZ WAM PRESENTS

# ME TWO

THE PERSON WHO IS TWO PERSONS

A FILM BY NICOLAS & BRUNO

SCREENPLAY NICOLAS & BRUNO STARRING DANIEL AUTEUIL ALAIN CHABAT MARINA FOIS FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR THOMAS BRUTSCHI PRODUCTION MANAGER BRUNO VATIN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY LAURENT DAILLAND A.F.C. SET DESIGN STEPHANE ROZENBAUM COSTUMES CHARLOTTE DAVID CASTING JEANNE MILLET SOUND MICHEL CASANG EMMANUEL AUGEAUD THIERRY LEBON FILM EDITOR REYNALD BERTRAND ORIGINAL SCORE NICOLAS ERRERA INTERNATIONAL SALES STUDIOCANAL MUSIC PUBLISHING CHEZ WAMUSIC PRODUCED BY ALAIN CHABAT AMANDINE BILLOT CHRISTINE ROUXEL A CHEZ WAM STUDIOCANAL TF1 FILMS PRODUCTION COPRODUCTION

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STUDIO CANAL

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87 MINUTES  
FRENCH RELEASE: JUNE 18, 2008

## SYNOPSIS

Ex-singing star Gilles Gabriel's comeback plans are crushed when he runs into Jean-Christian Ranu, a slightly nutty accountant. Ranu's life becomes chaotic when he discovers that Gilles was killed and is now living inside his head. Gilles becomes Ranu's coach and helps him out of his lonely life. Ranu even finds the courage to ask his tough boss Muriel to dinner. But Gilles can't control his creation: Gilles finds Ranu's new behavior terribly embarrassing.

# NICOLAS & BRUNO

## SCRIPTWRITERS AND DIRECTORS

### **How did the story idea come about for your first film?**

It's a strange mixture of a genre we love – fantasy comedy – with themes that interest us like popular songs. The vintage look was also very important.

### **Your story is above all very human. What's at the heart of it?**

Gilles Gabriel is a popular singer, judged as old-fashioned by the intelligentsia but who nonetheless has his fans. As for Jean-Christian Ranu, even if the character seems dated, he's made up from the key parts of the three or four black sheep that still exist in every company and to whom nobody speaks because they bring bad luck. Initially, what interested us was finding out what would become of the performer Gabriel and the accountant Ranu if we mixed them up and they were obliged to live on top of one another all the time. We let the characters and their personal hopes lead us. In the end, they each provide a shock to the other's system and they help each other get back on their feet.

### **You didn't waste much time on the causes of this mental transfer – you just took a head-on approach to this cohabitation between two individuals with nothing in common and who never should have met.**

Gilles Gabriel and Jean-Christian Ranu live in totally different worlds and are pretty hostile at the start. They are like two people shut in the same room and forced to get along in order to move forwards. We didn't actually dwell on the causes of this mental cohabitation. Sometimes there are moral justifications in American fantasy comedies but we're no moralizers – we don't want to explain the whys and wherefores. You have to leave some mystery, and the best way to explain what we want to say is to forget about it, let ourselves go, and let it come out through the comedy. That's how we do it.

### **How did you choose your actors?**

We talked about the lead character with Alain Chabat, and without discussing it, we all put Daniel Auteuil at the top of our list. We've been fans since the early days of his career and we wanted to revisit his comic strengths – his mastery of comedy – whilst profiting from the intensity he has acquired from all the very deep characters he's taken on in the past. He brings humanity and credibility to a scene that might at first seem crazy or extreme. We didn't think there was much chance that he'd accept the role. We told him about the story and what we intended to do, and he very quickly accepted. With Alain, it was a different approach. We were working with him every day, and right from the start we'd decided to offer him the role of the singer. But things were left unsaid and we were a little shy, so even if we had that idea in mind, we didn't talk about it. After working on the script and having him read it, we decided to offer him the role. We also knew that he and Daniel wanted to work together. And he jumped at the part! We believe Marina Fois is one of the best actresses out there. She's both beautiful, very funny, and curious, with that crazy side that means she is believable as both a career girl in the city and a chick who sings. She can carry that solitude and that weirdness, and can finish up in that great restaurant scene at the end. She's capable of carrying off that turnaround. We ended up working with our three favorite actors – we were very spoiled.

### **Was Alain there every time you shot with Daniel hearing his voice?**

As soon as we'd finished writing, and even before preparing for the shoot, we were working from the principle that whatever happened, Ranu had to have an acting partner. So Daniel and Alain had to work together. It was out of the question to use recordings, or interns to feed the lines as sometimes happens in telephone conversation scenes. Alain is very generous, both as a producer and as an actor, and just like Daniel, he really played the game. Most of the time, Alain was in soundproof cabin a few meters from the set, with a video feed, a microphone and surrounded by photos of brains. He delivered his lines to Daniel who was wearing an earpiece, so they really did perform together. Alain was just as involved as an actor as he was as a producer. He worked with us, supported us, reassured us when we had doubts, and he was someone with real opinions off whom we could bounce our ideas.

### **In terms of directing the actors, was the distance between Alain and Daniel at all off-putting?**

We had the advantage of already having worked with Alain. We did readings and we agreed to "abandon" him on set. Pretty early on, we did some tests with Daniel, with and without the earpiece. And with the earpiece, we could see a little gleam in his eye. He was really talking to someone inside his head. We had headphones with both of their voices, so on set, we were sometimes the only ones who could hear them both. And sometimes, we took off our headphones and watched Daniel speaking alone in a corner or bursting out laughing because Alain was carrying on talking to him. And that way we could already see what the finished film would look like.

### **In your working partnership, are you completely interchangeable, or do you each have your own role?**

We do everything together from A to Z. And this way of working is both a habit and fairly simple in terms of egos. It's a communal dish. We lose track of who wrote or said what. But that doesn't matter. On set, we try not to give contradictory directions, but that almost never happens because we're on the same wavelength. Moreover, we work closely together upstream, so we already have most of the answers to our questions and we can talk with one voice.

### **Faced with three actors of these dimensions, how did you work on the set?**

Working with such great talents could have felt intimidating, but we were so passionate about the movie that we were really involved in it, without intellectualizing our relationships. We were making the film together and sharing a real adventure, so everything went very well, and was very natural. We were working with talented, generous and very simple people. For all his craziness, Daniel is very serious and hugely conscientious. As for Alain, don't even talk about it! And we were totally in sync with Marina. They are all actors with whom it's a huge pleasure to work.

### **All of your shooting locations are visually very strong – how did you choose them?**

Two and a half years went by between talking to Alain about the project and the start of shooting, which lasted eight weeks. We were personally involved in the location finding. We worked with an excellent team with whom we've worked before, and to whom Alain introduced us. We shot almost the whole film at La Défense, the modern business district in western Paris, apart from the scenes at the house and those in the hospital, which is in the countryside. We spent six months looking for Daniel's apartment. In the start, we were looking for something with a view of La Défense and of the ring road in front. After a month, we realized we'd never find it so we started looking for a room with a view on a road, where we could set up a team of at least 20 people. As for COGIP – the office where Ranu works – the audience believes it's at La Défense, but in fact, it's in the Paris suburb of Ivry, in a new office building created by the architect Wilmotte. When we first went into this extremely impressive building, we immediately felt like the architect had seen Jacques Tati's movie PLAYTIME. And it was in that wonderful lobby that we shot the scene where Daniel and Alain are wearing white suits and are carrying guns...

**What are you most happy about from your first feature-length film?**

During the whole preparation process, there was this kind of simplicity, but we kept remembering that we were talking about our film with Alain, and that made us really happy. Also, during the shoot, we were working, full of enthusiasm, and from time to time, we remembered we were shooting with Daniel and Marina. Once again, it was insane! We worked for around 18 months on the writing, working closely with Alain. We experienced many, many things and everyone we met helped us give an even more intense form to what we had in our minds.

# DANIEL AUTEUIL

(JEAN-CHRISTIAN RANU)

## **How did you react on reading such an unusual script?**

Obviously, when you read the script, it seems pretty strange at first. But then pretty quickly, you come back to what's in front of you. Once you've accepted the premise, you find yourself in seemingly normal comedic situations, but which get all their wit from the inventiveness of Bruno and Nicolas. What is sure is that you enter into a mindset that clearly belongs to them and you don't leave it until the end. That's one of the film's strengths.

## **What did you find most appealing?**

Their originality. You don't see their kind of humor very often in films, which is why I was instantly attracted to the new feel of this comedy. And at the same time, my character doesn't live the experience as the audience lives it – he's confused by himself and I found that really fun to perform.

## **How does one prepare for such a role?**

The particular difficulty with ME TWO was knowing how to live with Alain inside me. How to speak for oneself from that starting point? The task wasn't a simple one but it was really fun to do.

## **How did you shoot the scenes with Alain Chabat talking in your head?**

Alain was on set every day, feeding me his lines through an earpiece I wore. It was like he was in my head! We made a fantastic partnership, but it was pretty tricky to handle because the person I become isn't me at all, and isn't Gilles Gabriel either. So there was a whole load of things to find to develop the character, in his looks, his gestures...

## **What do you like about Alain Chabat the actor?**

Right from the very first time I saw him on TV, I was struck by the fantastic ideas, the imagination, the humor and the poetry coming from him. As a viewer, I've always been a big fan of his. As an actor but also as a producer for the original ideas he just keeps on coming up with. He's a real breath of fresh air for French cinema.

## **And on the set, what is Chabat the producer like?**

Alain is one of those actors who have chosen to produce in order to have tools that facilitate their task. And once things are in place upstream, all he has to deal with on the set are acting issues and never production ones.

## **Was there anything you weren't looking forward to on the shoot?**

Funnily enough, it was only on set that I actually realized that there was only going to be me on the screen, because during the whole preparatory phase, the other person – Gilles Gabriel – really existed in my mind. And from then onwards, I had to really think hard about how to make visible someone who isn't actually there. I was dreading that, because the entire film hinges on it. So to check that I was going in the right direction, from time to time – just as I usually do – I'd go and check the monitor. I can do that without it bothering me. And with this film, given the character I was playing, with that hair and that look, it was almost like looking at a different person.

**In this film, the costumes and sets are hugely important. Did you feel that on the shoot?**

When you read a script like ME TWO, of course you ask yourself questions. You realize right from the start what a gem of intelligence, wit and obsession you're dealing with. But then, of course, you wonder if you're up to what has been written. Our performance as well as the sets and costumes must be part of the creation of this unique atmosphere on screen. And with this film, I realized very quickly that that would be the case – right from the preparation phase.

**Does a film like this require a different kind of concentration?**

It requires some really hard work, but that doesn't mean I isolate myself more from the other people on set, because my way of working means that I'm concentrated from morning until night. That means having half my brain fixed on the script and the film, and the other half available for other people. The internal allocation doesn't change, but there's a high demand for the working part.

**What was your favorite scene to shoot?**

I have to say that it was great fun with the real Alain, but also with Marina Foïs. Firstly, because I finally got to act with someone in front of me, and secondly because that person was Marina. She is a simply extraordinary actress. And knowing that I was going to be acting with her was a big part of the pleasure of doing this role.

**What particular enjoyment do you get from working in comedies?**

I feel it's like regularly getting back in touch with part of childhood, something very fun that is also about who I am. I also need to tell stories like that. But once again, it's the stories that dictate. For me, it's not about making a comedy for the sake of it. Because whatever the genre of the projects I'm offered, it's always on reading them that I know if I want to spend three months acting out that script or working with the other actors whose names will be on the film, or working with a director whom I consider to be original. That's how I choose.

**It also seems like you enjoy the singing scenes you got to do in the film.**

ME TWO is a complete show thanks to the extension of fantasy it offers. I enjoyed those scenes because I like watching them as part of the audience, so acting in them is of course a real treat. There are two real pleasures: the pleasure of the moment – once again something very childish – and the knowledge of the pleasure you're giving, that will be felt by the people who go and see the film.

**Is the finished film how you imagined it would be?**

I could never have imagined such a result. With some films, you can get an idea because during the shoot, you see what is being sketched out. But not with ME TWO. And the one thing I absolutely couldn't have imagined is how Gilles Gabriel manages to exist within the flesh and blood constraints of my character.

**Who would you like to have in your head instead of Gilles Gabriel?**

Not too many people because it's crowded enough as it is!

# ALAIN CHABAT

(GILLES GABRIEL) - ALSO PRODUCER

## **How did Nicolas & Bruno present you with their project?**

I met Nicolas & Bruno in 2002 during a New Year's Eve special edition of "Burger Quiz" that I was doing for Canal+. It was a show with a lot of guests, and it was a great laugh. I'd really liked what Nicolas & Bruno had done before, and for this "Burger Quiz", we gave them carte blanche and they came up with a five or six-minute sketch, that they'd written and directed, with their famous character Ranu, that they asked me to perform. Marina Foïs was also in the sketch – set, of course, in a company canteen (the COGIP already) – with a Ranu obsessed with paella, who talks to himself (already). Nicolas & Bruno took the idea and ran with it, coming to me a few months later with a pitch for a fantasy comedy: after an accident, a scrupulous accountant is obliged to share his body with a singer from the 1980s. Two characters with absolutely nothing in common are forced to share the ultimate intimacy. And still with their recurring themes and characters like Ranu, the COGIP and the hell of office life.

## **What made you want to get involved as an actor? And as a producer?**

You produce a film because you like the subject and/or the director. It's the same when you're an actor. And here, we had both. As for all the productions I've done with Christine Rouxel, we work with the authors to try to help them during the writing process. With Nicolas & Bruno, it was easy. They are funny, enthusiastic, open and talented. They're not afraid of changing, improving or reconsidering. They have a totally unique and original universe, and very precise ideas about what they want to see and the story they want to tell. This was their first film and I was amazed to see to what extent they were in control, both in terms of form as well as in substance.

## **Tell us about your character, Gilles Gabriel?**

Gilles is a singer. He's convinced he's the French Marvin Gaye. He made a record back in the 1980s called "Flou de Toi" (Vague About You), and let's say that since then, things have been quieter. His post-Flou success didn't really happen. But today, he's about to make a comeback when unfortunately Ranu runs him over and kills him.

## **You only perform with Daniel Auteuil. How did you work with him in such unusual circumstances?**

I performed with Daniel for nine weeks, from a closed booth with a microphone and speakers. He had an earpiece and the idea was that I'd be in his head. We did a first reading and, as a reflex action, I tried to meet Daniel's gaze, which he carefully avoided doing, his nose obstinately stuck into the pages. He told me that that would be the reality of the shoot. We wouldn't see one another. We had to create a collusion, a sense of over-crowding, an intimacy, but without seeing one another. It was very unusual.

## **What did you think about Marina Foïs' performance?**

For sincerity, timing and sense of comedy, she's absolutely spot on. I'm a big fan of Marina's anyway, granted, but what she did with the character of Murielle Perrache is magnificent. She created an appealing, complex, fragile and extraordinarily funny character. And having seen the film dozens of times in editing and mixing etc., I'm surprised each time by the things I find and the situations she sets up. And the alchemy with Daniel Auteuil is simply perfect. They're the crème de la crème.

**When you read the script, were you impatient to act certain scenes?**

Above all, I was pleased about being able to take singing lessons with Nathalie Dupuy. That was a real eye-opener – learning to breathe, placing one's voice, holding notes, interpreting. That's one of the fun things about making movies – pretending.

**What's the one thing you'll remember about this adventure?**

Nicolas & Bruno's enthusiasm when they direct the actors. It was a pleasure to see them jumping for joy on their seats and yelling out that it was "wonderful", "fantastic" and "magnificent". And then we did another take – they're enthusiastic but exacting.

# MARINA FOIS

(MURIELLE PERRACHE)

## What did you think when you read the script?

I like it when a script has somebody's stamp on it, especially for comedy, and this one really does. Nicolas & Bruno have a very special universe, with the visuals and the vocabulary that go with it. It's an unusual blend of modern and outdated, and they're both fascinated by the world of the office, which in itself is unusual. You have the feeling that they could go on exploring this world forever. In fact, I'm fascinated by their fascination! The idea for their story – one man living inside another – is very funny, but when I read the script, I discovered a hybrid mixture. It's a comedy that is both full of fantasy and yet very human, that can also be read – beyond the jokes – as the story of a vaguely romantic encounter, or simply the story of an improbable friendship. Moreover, even if the film isn't a comedy with a message, deep down, there is still a message there: we're not necessarily best off with the people we are most like, and perhaps it's worth looking beyond clothes, appearances and preconceived ideas. But even simply taken at face value, I don't think it's totally brainless.

## Tell us about your character

Muriel Perrache is an "ordinary" woman – perhaps the most ordinary of the bunch – but she has the neuroses of her time. Socially, she's totally integrated and she's absolutely conventional. She's a perfect company woman, or at least she is in the start. Muriel is one of those people who put their education and their career above everything. The company is her family. It's her life. She furiously pursues her goal of success ready to sacrifice anything for it, with a tension that leave no place for diversions or fantasy. It was the very dry, arid side of such a life that interested me. I very carefully learned the blocks of text required for the role of Muriel, without understanding the technical accounting and finance terms that she masters perfectly. I found it great fun to talk about products, percentages, mergers and acquisitions, feedback processes – things I know nothing about and that mean nothing to me as I've got no head for numbers – whilst appearing to know what I was on about.

## And yet your character in no way descends into caricature...

I tried to avoid that because I think that people like her do exist, and even if they are defined by their job, they are still real human beings. And if she's forced to give up certain aspects of her life in the name of professional success – and she herself says she hasn't had time for sex for years – she still must have some humanity left about her. I guess she eats, goes to the bathroom and suffers the constraints of having a body around her brain like we all do, and so from time to time, she has emotions, too. And then what happens to her, deep down, is totally tragic – she gets crushed by the system that she has built. That's very humiliating, right? One day, they decide she's no longer profitable, no longer necessary, and they fire her. In losing her job, she loses everything – her Wonder Woman outfit, the shell that goes with it. She also finds the time to think rather than to act. And it's perhaps all of that that makes her meeting with Ranu possible.

## What was it like working with Daniel Auteuil?

I knew him as we'd met at the Césars and he very gently scolded me for confessing that I hadn't dared write him to tell him how much I admire him. I was both a little intimidated and very excited by the idea of working with him. It blew my mind! Like with Depardieu, with whom I've had the chance to work, he's one of those people who is more powerful than all your fears, your ticks and your idiosyncrasies. Opposite him, everything's easy. He's so appealing that the scene begins and all you have to do is follow. Just looking at him is enough to exist. I really loved working with him. It was a real opportunity for an actor. And what's more, Daniel doesn't act like a master with a student. He doesn't present himself as someone with a lot of experience. Simply, concretely and in a very pragmatic way, without even realizing, he transmits the essential.

**What was it like working with the directors?**

They're unique people, and are quite the opposite of ME TWO – they've got two bodies and one single brain! They speak with the same voice. They are extremely precise and fastidious – you might even say obsessive. They have an incredible sense of detail and leave nothing to chance. They know down to the very last period exactly how their text should be performed. I enjoyed getting into their world. I don't have a method of acting and I don't want one, either.

**What will you remember about the film?**

It was great fun and that's really something. And I also have a very pleasant little feeling of having done something unique in the sense that this was a one-off, as I'm not sure I'll learn Dutch again, or be an intern in a company (which I did at the directors' request), or be sexually harassed by Daniel Auteuil.

# SELECTED FILMOGRAPHIES

## DANIEL AUTEUIL

**MR 73** by Olivier Marchal (2008)

**SECOND WIND** by Alain Corneau (2007)

**CONVERSATION WITH MY GARDENER** by Jean Becker (2007)

**THE VALET** by Francis Veber (2006)

**HIDDEN** by Michael Haneke (2005)  
*European Film Award for Best Actor*

**36** by Olivier Marchal (2004)

**THE CLOSET** by Francis Veber (2001)

**GIRL ON THE BRIDGE** by Patrice Leconte (1999)  
*César Award for Best Actor*

## ALAIN CHABAT

**I DO** by Eric Lartigau (2006)  
*César Award Nomination for Best Actor*

**THE SCIENCE OF SLEEP** by Michel Gondry (2006)

**AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER** by Yvan Attal (2004)

**ASTERIX & OBELIX: MISSION CLEOPATRA** (also director-producer) (2002)

**THE TASTE OF OTHERS** by Agnès Jaoui (2000)  
*César Award Nomination for Best Supporting Actor*

**DIDIER** (also writer-director) (1997)  
*César Award for Best First Feature*

## MARINA FOÏS

**CHANGE OF PLANS** by Danièle Thompson (2008)

**DARLING** by Christine Carrière (2007)  
*César Award Nomination for Best Actress*

**A TICKET TO SPACE** by Eric Lartigau (2006)

**J'ME SENS PAS BELLE** by Bernard Jeanjean (2004)

**FILLES PERDUES, CHEVEUX GRAS** by Claude Duty (2002)  
*César Award Nomination for Most Promising Actress*

**ASTERIX & OBELIX: MISSION CLEOPATRA** by Alain Chabat (2002)

## CAST

Jean-Christian Ranu  
Gilles Gabriel  
Muriel Perrache  
Doctor  
Hearing test nurse  
Sex education teacher

**Daniel Auteuil**  
**Alain Chabat**  
**Marina Foïs**  
**Francois Damiens**  
**Denis Marechal**  
**Fred Tousch**

## CREW

Producers

**Alain Chabat**

Directors

**Amandine Billot**

First assistant director

**Christine Rouxel**

Production manager

**Nicolas & Bruno**

Script supervisor

**Thomas Brutschi**

Casting

**Bruno Vatin**

Extras casting

**Anne Wermelinger**

Unit production manager

**Jeanne Millet**

Cinematography

**Pascale Beraud**

Set photography

**Bruno Salinas**

Making of

**Laurent Dailland**

Sound

**Arnaud Borrel**

Costumes

**Cyril Cohen**

Make-up

**Michel Casang**

Hairdresser

**Charlotte David**

Key grip

**Joël Lavau**

Gaffer

**Laurent Bozzi**

Set design

**Gil Fontbonne**

Post-production supervisor

**Pascal Pajaud**

Editing

**Stéphane Rozenbaum**

Supervising sound editor

**Cyril Contejean**

Sound re-recording mixer

**Reynald Bertrand**

Music

**Emmanuel Augeard**

**Thierry Lebon**

**Nicolas Errera**