

SOUDAINE COMPAGNIE

Presents



SABINE AZEMA

and

JEAN-PIERRE DARROUSSIN

in

LE VOYAGE AUX PYRENEES

A film by

ARNAUD and JEAN-MARIE LARRIEU

100 mins - Dolby SRD -1:66

WORLD SALES

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SYNOPSIS

Alexandre Darou and Aurore Lalu are a famous acting couple. Under the pseudonym of “Mr and Mrs Go” they escape to an isolated valley in the Pyrenees, arriving in the secrecy of night. Alexandre has chosen this hide-away in the hope that it will cure Aurore of her rampant nymphomania and, with any luck, breathe new life into their relationship...

CAST

Aurore Lalu	Sabine Azema
Alexandre Dard	Jean-Pierre Darroussin
Aline	Arly Jover
Tenzing	Kyap Gurgon
Bear	Cyril Casmèze
Reporter	Christian Améri
Brothers	Philippe Katerine
	Pierre Pellet
	Philippe Suner
Les Gardes	Jérôme Chappatte
	Christian Loustau
Masseur	Christophe Paou
Man with donkeys	Erwan Ribart
Innkeeper	Jocelyne Desverchère
Woman reporter	Cécile Reigher

Special appearance by

Amira Casar

As the socialite reporter

and

Bernard Blancan

INTERVIEW WITH ARNAUD AND JEAN-MARIE LARRIEU

How did you come up with the idea of an offbeat comedy with fantasy/mystical elements in the Pyrenees Mountains?

A: Like all filmmakers we had always dreamed of achieving THE big project, which would feature all the stories we wanted to tell. We imagined that this all-embracing movie would be set in the Pyrenees, the region we come from. It would encompass mountaineering, a romantic trip, mysterious legends of apparitions and bear stories... *Le Voyage aux Pyrénées* is a concise, fast-paced, high-octane version of this all-embracing movie.

JM: After *To Paint or Make Love*, we started a very ambitious project, a movie which was both urban and international. We had finished the script but the shooting was postponed for a year. As we had a short window to do something, we decided to start writing anew straight away. We had lunch with Sabine Azéma from time to time and we made her the following offer: we would shoot a movie in the mountains in autumn, you will be an actress and wife of another actor, the title will be *Le Voyage aux Pyrénées*. We had a title, two characters, a setting - she immediately said yes.

A: We came up very quickly with the idea that our two main characters would be famous actors. Sabine was thrilled. She said: "*You never see actors on holiday in movies!*" Our vision of acting centred on this idea. Can an actor go on holiday? Can he or she sometimes stop acting? This was what we wanted to shoot: an unlikely holiday of two actors in the mountains. The first imperative was writing fast to be able to shoot before winter.

JM: The movie was written in full before the shooting but we still left it totally open to improvisation.

What images did you have in mind?

JM: The writing centred on three quite peculiar themes! 1. Two famous actors, husband and wife. The husband decides to treat his nymphomaniac wife by confronting her with the beauty of the mountains. 2. A bear, because if you ask the typical Frenchman what comes to his mind if you mention the Pyrenees Mountains, he'll say "bears"! 3. What was first referred to as "soul exchange" before it became "body exchange." This was inspired by the mystique of the mountain, what with all those stories of saintly 'apparitions' that crop up in Pyrenees legend... These three aspects overlapped with one another - you can say that actors are almost like 'apparitions' too.

What made you feel like writing a comedy?

JM: To start with, the subtitle was "A Fantasy for Two Famous Actors." The dictionary definition is interesting: "An imaginative work in which the artist does not have to abide by strict rules."

A: This freedom can be seen in the way we gleefully indulged in crazy variations, without sticking to a classic narrative or genre.

JM: We took the liberty of doing a certain number of things which we wouldn't have done if we had had more time to spare. Take for instance the leap into the irrational, into non-realism, which the actors helped us to imagine and formulate.

This leap into the void is quite symbolic – one of the characters even does bungee jumping!

JM: The actress' name is Arly Jover and she really did jump after we did a long shot during which she had been flirting with Jean-Pierre Darroussin. Given the circumstances and the script, the atmosphere was, shall we say, a little charged with passion. We had to do something about it!

Why go back to the Pyrenees after shooting a movie in the Alps?

JM: This is the paradoxical part of filmmaking. After *To Paint or Make Love*, we wanted to leave the mountains but we ended up with an essentially Pyrenean movie. We had to work fast, so we chose what we knew best.

A: Yet going back to the Pyrenees was like being confronted by an ever greater mystery. Since we've been living in Paris we haven't been going to that region very often, but every time we spend a day there, it's like being on a journey, like discovering a new country. When you go beyond the surface, beyond the idea of enjoying the open air, the weather, beyond sightseeing or doing sport, the mountain turn into something quite different.

Something awe-inspiring?

JM: Obviously the movie does not feature a welcoming mountain! Our job as filmmakers was to deal jointly with two opposite aspects of the movie. The script was filled with humour but there was something awe-inspiring and fearsome about the setting we were shooting in. Despite the farcical element a serious question remained – what is it that strikes us about a beautiful mountain? Where does this incredible emotion spring from? We wanted to set the awesome mystery of nature against the great conundrum of acting. An actor needs an audience and without an audience, he's facing a brick wall. What does he do in that case? Does he stop acting?

A: Shooting a comedy in such a monumental setting had us get closer to a state of mind reminding us of our childhood with its mix of fears, happy moments and expectations.

How does the mountain turn into a character?

A: The challenging part was to frame both the grandeur of nature and the human face, and we have been making progress with each new movie we've made. The basic problem when you are in the mountains is that when you shoot at eye-level the summits are way off-camera. Therefore you have to shoot the actors from below, from the perspective of the slope. It calls for real topographic measurements.

JM: In *Le Voyage aux Pyrénées* you can make out most of the highest Pyrenean summits in the background, like the famous Breach of Roland, which served as the location of one of our previous movies, or the steep ascent routes first climbed by the two great pioneers of modern "Pyreneism": Jean and Pierre Ravier, two twin brothers, who were trailblazers and still carry on with their work at the age of 74! They never took any physical training but spend whole weeks watching pictures of summits to discover untrodden paths. They are great visionaries. They make cinema out of real life.

A: These mountains, like of deserts of stone, are laden with stories and memories. They are like characters whose mood changes, according to the light.

Near the summits, it's necessary to capture the light at the right time before it fades away. How did you deal with that in your movie?

JM: We had the advantage of being familiar with the place, we knew when, say, a forest would be misty. We were shooting in November with very short spans of daylight: no sunlight until 10 am and dusk at 5 pm. But because of this we could also shoot everyday at sunrise and sunset, which was a big advantage.

A: For all the sequences we always took one shot in which the shadow slowly edges into the frame. Sometimes our cinematographer Guillaume Deffontaines would "seek" the sunlight further up the slope and would bring it back into the shot by ingeniously using mirror images.

JM: The movie was shot in five weeks' time. We were at the mercy of the weather. We became experts on interpreting the weather forecast. Some funny scenes were shot when the temperature was at minus ten!. The actors were great though and went with the flow.

Sabine Azéma's character is so affected by the mountainous expanses that she feels like vanishing into them...

JM: It is what she feels as an actress and as a woman. When a filmmaker finds himself in the mountains, his first feeling is paradoxical: he feels something that outstrips cinema and which at the same time matches a great vision of filmmaking. We love cinema when it is "transcendental" as with Rossellini for instance. In *Le Voyage aux Pyrénées* the

challenge was to set the actors, who epitomize ultimate illusion, in a natural but artistically controlled setting.

A: Many shots in the movie are reminiscent of studio paintings.

Did you have Alain Resnais' work in mind?

JM: Definitely. And not only because of the obvious link with Sabine Azéma. It was as if Resnais himself were shooting with us in the Pyrenees! The choice of the make-believe bear was consistent with what he would have done. Take a fake element and carry the idea through to completion.

Why did you come up with the idea of the nymphomania for Sabine Azéma's character? Sexuality is a recurrent motif through your films.

JM: First there is an ironic reference to the 19th-early 20th century tradition which extolled the healing virtues of a stay in the mountains. And a nymphomaniac seemed more likely to be the butt of everybody's jokes than somebody with, say... tuberculosis.

A: We knew that Sabine Azéma's character would be an excellent opportunity for comic timing because of the repetition: each time she comes across a man, is she going to make a pass at him?

JM: This is at the beginning of the movie. But what happens when the character has an uncontrollable sex drive but doesn't meet anyone when she finds herself immersed in the mountains? There are two options - either the beastly side of her sexuality prevails when she encounters the bear. Or the opposite happens: the mystical side of sexuality takes over and the character encounters... heaven!

A: We also intended to pick up on the study of the couple we'd started in our previous movies. *A Real Man* followed the pattern - encounter/break-up/reconciliation, or the making of a couple. Then came the consolidation of the couple with *To Paint or Make Love* which described the couple at a later stage or how they struggled to keep desire alive... In *Le Voyage aux Pyrénées* we assumed the opposite viewpoint: a couple who don't have sex anymore but are still living together.

JM: Clearly both husband and wife have sexual desire, the wife much more than the husband. What will they go through before they are able to make love again? They will have to embark on a journey, to go through a metamorphosis. This is the main idea behind the movie.

You have used the word "metamorphosis." *Le Voyage aux Pyrénées* is also a film about actors.

JM: Sabine Azéma's character keeps saying that she is scared of the mountain. At the same time she sticks her head in the lion's mouth. It's a bit like *"I'm scared of everything but this is exactly where I want to go!"* It's a comic trick, echoing the paradoxical nature of acting. Actors are both utterly self-conscious and the exact opposite. In the movie the actor's paradox is transferred onto sexual drive.

Where does your love for actors, which is obvious in the movie, stem from?

JM: The first intense encounter was with Mathieu Amalric who was in *Roland's Pass* and *A Real Man*. He is the epitome of the paradoxical actor: he even claims he's not an actor! On the other hand Sabine Azéma and Daniel Auteuil were just the opposite about *To Paint or Make Love*: *"We are actors, we'll do what you ask us to do, direct us."* This new movie is a different challenge. A man performs the role of a woman, and the other way around, one of the characters is a mock bear, we have blended slapstick humour and anxiety... I want to insist on one point: we owe this freedom of expression to actors. An actor is like an amazingly irrational sponge. They can work magic. In the Middle-Ages they used to be excommunicated!

A: At the end of *Le Voyage aux Pyrénées*, our two actors run away. This takes place outside the old Templar Church... When actors can suddenly appear or be metamorphosed, acting touches upon the sacred. They joyfully bring... a curse.

Language, nature, territory, sex... One can always change into someone else in *Le Voyage aux Pyrénées*... You have this character from Tibet...

JM: Tenzing: it is also the name of the first Sherpa who climbed Mount Everest with Sir Edmund Hillary in 1953... In the movie he greets the two actors in the Pyrenees with his Spanish-born partner Aline.

Rather than have locals speak in their dialect we thought it would be funnier and more exciting to hear one of the languages of the ultimate mountains, the Himalayas. It is undeniable that whoever was born in the mountains feels at home in any mountain in the world. It is the opposite of regionalism. Consequently the Bigourdan language (a local dialect) is heard in songs, which is not far from the Latin in Francis Poulenc's mass in G major.

A: We took the idea of a trip very seriously. When I say trip, I mean all sorts of trips. Even a trip with hallucinogenic mushrooms...

JM: It's a trip-movie!

The emergence of the bear is reminiscent of Walerian Borowczik's *The Beast* (1975), a blend of eroticism and fantasy.

JM: Indeed we watched this movie again and it did help us. We wondered whether the bear should be a mock bear or if we had to play the realistic card. We ended up deciding it would be both, i.e. a stage bear and at the same time a rather awe-inspiring animal. Thanks to Borowczik's movie we realized that a pasteboard animal could be as visually striking as a real one, and that it offered more options.

Ironically enough before the shooting we'd met a very special actor, Cyril Casmèze, who specializes in playing animals, particularly wild animals. His performances are so realistic that he appears to be verging on possession. He generally won't wear any outfit because, he says, it hinders his movements. He'd rather create a character which is across between man and beast.

We managed to talk him into wearing a bear outfit and we were able to get a multi-faceted creature, the sort which the two actors fantasized about. The creature embodies all fantasies ranging from the childhood's teddy-bear to the starving beast, from the circus animal to the Kosovo refugee, from the psychopath in disguise to the sex maniac. Not forgetting of course, the farcical actor on holiday.

Encounter with the bear seems to be a turning point leading to another dimension.

JM: It is the third part of the movie, the "beyond." Sabine Azéma's character reappears in the guise of someone else, and one may wonder if she is real: some think she is a "wild woman", others think she is an "apparition."

A: We had added a fantasy on love to this fantasy on death: the couple of actors switch bodies... The wife finds herself in the husband's body and vice-versa.

It is the climax of the movie - quite a daring move!

A: We had not anticipated the outcome because on the shoot each actor used his/her own voice. It was only during the ADR process that the voices were switched.

JM: As the filmmakers we had to take the plunge, but so did everybody else. The two actors had to get ready then to receive each other's voices later on.

A: Jean-Pierre totally inhabited Sabine's "soul", he played Sabine...

JM: ... Sabine on the other hand, when she played Jean-Pierre, was playing all men.

A: Their contrasting attitude was highly fruitful. Sabine's acting is very intense, while Jean-Pierre's is more low-key.

JM: Each of them had to be willing to inhabit the other's body.

A: ... or rather each body had to be willing to host the other's voice.

In a playful way we all found ourselves trying to solve the tricky question of the relationships between body and soul.

Then came the time when they were reunited and eventually managed to make love.

JM: They behaved like teenagers. As if they were making love for the first time. We had thought at a very early stage that for us acting meant being in somebody else's footsteps. In the movie this meant being in the place of somebody diametrically opposed (the opposite sex) and also in the place of somebody one is familiar with (the acting partner).

A: We wanted to transcend acting and to deal more generally with couples.

Le Voyage aux Pyrénées cuts across genre lines...

JM: It's a bit of our vision of filmmaking. It starts off in a certain way, then changes just like a trip in the mountains. After half an hour the audience can look back on the beginning of the movie, as if they stood on the summit and think: we have covered some distance indeed!

CREW

Directed by	Arnaud and Jean-Marie LARRIEU
Written by	Arnaud and Jean-Marie LARRIEU
Editor	Annette DUTERTRE
Director of Photography	Guillaume DEFFONTAINES
Sound Designer	Olivier MAUVEZIN
Sound Editor	Béatrice WICK
Sound Mixer	Stéphane THIEBAUT
Stills Photographer	Jérôme PREBOIS
First Assistant Director	Arnaud DOMMERC
Script Supervisor	Lydia BIGARD
Casting Director	Stéphane BATUT
Production Designer	Laurent BAUDE
Costume Designers	Laurence STRUZ and Caroline TAVERNIER
Make-Up Artist	Sylvie AÏD-DENISOT
Hairdresser	José-Luis CASAS
Location Manager	Jean-Marie MODET
Line Producer	Angeline MASSONI

Produced by Bruno PESERY

Composer
Daven KELLER

Additional Music
Francis POULENC

A
SOUDAINE COMPAGNIE
Production

With the participation of
CANAL +
and
TPS STAR

With the support of

Région Midi-Pyrénées

In association with
CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA CINÉMATOGRAPHIE

and
SOFICA CINEMAGE 2
COFINOVA 4
and
SOFICINEMA 4

Sabine AZEMA

Writer/Director

BONJOUR MONSIEUR DOISNEAU OU LE PHOTOGRAPHE ARROSE (1992)
QUAND LE CHAT SOURIT (1997).

Selected filmography

Sabine Azéma was seen in films by Alain Resnais including **LIFE IS A BED OF ROSES (LA VIE EST UN ROMAN)** / **LOVE UNTO DEATH (L'AMOUR A MORT)** / **MELO** / **SMOKING-NO SMOKING** / **SAME OLD SONG (ON CONNAIT LA CHANSON)** / **NOT ON THE LIPS (PAS SUR LA BOUCHE)** / **PRIVATE FEARS IN PUBLIC PLACES (CŒURS)**. She will next appear in **LES HERBES FOLLES**.

She was seen in Bertrand Tavernier's **A SUNDAY IN THE COUNTRY (UN DIMANCHE A LA CAMPAGNE)** and **LIFE AND NOTHING BUT (LA VIE ET RIEN D'AUTRE)**, Etienne Chatiliez's **HAPPINESS IS IN THE FIELD (LE BONHEUR EST DANS LE PRE)** and **TANGUY**, Denis Podalydès's **MYSTERY OF THE YELLOW ROOM (LE MYSTERE DE LA CHAMBRE JAUNE)** / **PERFUME OF THE LADY IN BLACK (LE PARFUM DE LA DAME EN NOIRE)** and **BANCS PUBLICS (VERSAILLES RIVE ROITE)**.

She also appeared in Danièle Thompson's **SEASON'S BEATINGS (LA BUCHE)**, Gérard Oury's **LE SCHPOUNTZ**, François Dupeyron's **OFFICER'S WARD (LA CHAMBRE DES OFFICIERS)**, Florence Quentin **OLE**, Noémie Lvovsky's **LET'S DANCE (FAUT QUE CA DANSE !)**

After **TO PAINT OR MAKE LOVE (PEINDRE OU FAIRE L'AMOUR)**, **LE VOYAGE AUX PYRENEES** marks her second collaboration with Arnaud and Jean-Marie Larrieu.

Jean-Pierre DARROUSSIN

Writer/Director

C'EST TROP CON (1993 - short film)

PREMONITION (LE PRESSENTIMENT) (2006 - based on Emmanuel Bove's novel)

Selected filmography

Jean-Pierre Darroussin appeared in films by Robert Guédiguian including **KI LO SA ? / DIEU VOMIT LES TIEDES / 'TIL DEATH DO US PART (A LA VIE, A LA MORT !)** / **MARIUS AND JEANNETTE (MARIUS ET JEANNETTE)** / **WHERE THE HEART IS (A LA PLACE DU CŒUR)** / **CHARGE! (A L'ATTAQUE !)** / **THE TOWN IS QUIET (LA VILLE EST TRANQUILLE)** / **MARIE-JO AND HER 2 LOVERS (MARIE-JO ET SES 2 AMOURS)** / **MY FATHER IS AN ENGINEER (MON PERE EST INGENIEUR)** / **ARMENIA (LE VOYAGE EN ARMENIE)** / **LADY JANE**. He will next be seen in **L'ARMEE DU CRIME**.

He was seen in Cédric Klapisch's **LITTLE NOTHINGS (RIENS DU TOUT)** and **FAMILY RESEMBLANCES (UN AIR DE FAMILLE)**, Jeanne Labrune's **BEWARE OF MY LOVE (SI JE T'AIME, PREND GARDE A TOI)** / **TOMORROW'S ANOTHER DAY (CA IRA MIEUX DEMAIN)** / **SPECIAL DELIVERY (C'EST LE BOUQUET)** and **CAUSE TOUJOURS**, Marc Esposito's **FRENCHMEN (LE CŒUR DES HOMMES)** / **TOUTE LA BEAUTE DU MONDE** and **LE CŒUR DES HOMMES 2**, Guillaume Nicloux's **LE POULPE** and **A PRIVATE AFFAIR (UNE AFFAIRE PRIVEE)**, Gérard Bitton and Michel Munz's **IF I WERE A RICH MAN (AH ! SI J'ETAIS RICHE)** and **LE CACTUS**, Bertrand Blier's **MY MAN (MON HOMME)** and **HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE ME? (COMBIEN TU M'AIMES ?)**

He also appeared in Alain Resnais's **SAME OLD SONG (ON CONNAIT LA CHANSON)**, Christine Carrière's **WHO PLUCKED THE FEATHERS OFF THE MOON? (QUI PLUME LA LUNE ?)**, François Dupeyron's **WHAT'S LIFE? (C'EST QUOI LA VIE ?)**, Danièle Thompson's **SEASON'S BEATINGS (LA BUCHE)**, Cédric Kahn's **RED LIGHTS (FEUX ROUGES)**, Jean-Pierre Jeunet's **A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT (UN LONG DIMANCHE DE FIANCAILLES)**, Coline Serreau's **SAINT-JACQUES-LA MECQUE**, Jérôme Bonnell's **WAITING FOR SOMEONE (J'ATTENDS QUELQU'UN)**, Jean Becker's **CONVERSATIONS WITH MY GARDENER (DIALOGUE AVEC MON JARDINIER)** ...

LE VOYAGE AUX PYRENEES marks Darroussin's first collaboration with Arnaud and Jean-Marie Larrieu.

On stage, Jean-Pierre Darroussin has worked with directors like **Pierre Pradinas** (Alain Gaultre's *Babylone* and *Place de Breteuil* / Chekhov's *The Seagull* / *Gevrey Chambertin* and *Les amis de Monsieur Gazon*, a collective writing by Compagnie du Chapeau Rouge), **Jacques Seiler** (Rolland Dubillard's *La maison d'os*), **Andréas Voutsinas** (Henri Bernstein's *Le secret de*), **Jean Bouchaud** (Fernand Seltz's *Entrevue au parloir*), **Stéphan Meldegg** (Agnès Jaoui and Jean-Pierre Bacri's *Cuisine et Dépendances* and *Un air de famille de*), **Bernard Murat** (Jean-Claude Carrière's *La terrasse*), **Wladimir Yordanoff** (Wladimir Yordanoff's *Droit de retour*), **Roger Planchon** (Chekhov's *The Wood Demon*)...

Arnaud and Jean-Marie LARRIEU

Arnaud and Jean-Marie Larrieu are brothers.

They were born respectively in 1966 and 1965 in Lourdes (Hautes Pyrénées).

Filmography:

- 2005 TO PAINT OR MAKE LOVE (PEINDRE OU FAIRE L'AMOUR)
Official Selection - In competition - Cannes Festival 2005
feature - 98 min - released August 24, 2005
starring Sabine Azema, Daniel Auteuil, Amira Casar and Sergi Lopez
- 2003 A REAL MAN (UN HOMME UN VRAI)
feature - 120 min - released May 28, 2003
starring Hélène Fillières and Mathieu Amalric
- 2000 ROLAND'S PASS (LA BRÈCHE DE ROLAND)
feature - 47 min - released November 15, 2000
starring Mathieu Amalric and Cécile Reigher
- 1999 FIN D'ÉTÉ
feature - 68 min - released March 17, 1999
starring Philippe Siner, Pia Camilla Copper and Marie Henriau

Arnaud and Jean-Marie Larrieu have made several short films including:

- COURT VOYAGE (1987 - feature - 22 min)
TEMPS COUVERT (1988 - feature - 13 min)
LES BAIGNEURS (1991 - feature - 26 min)
CE JOUR-LÀ (1992 - feature and documentary - 52 min)
BERNARD OU LES APPARITIONS (1993 - feature - 30 min)
MADONNA À LOURDES (2001 - documentary and feature - 24 min - starring Hélène Fillières)
LES FENÊTRES SONT OUVERTES (NAISSANCE DE LA FICTION) (2005 - autobiographical documentary - 54 min)
LES COMÉDIENNES (PERSÉVÈRE DANS TON ÊTRE) (8 min) and A CHACUNE SA RUE (8min)
presented at TALENTS CANNES - ADAMI 2007