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CANNES 2008

Moteur S'il Vous Plaît presents

# GROWN UPS

A film by Anna Novion

Duration : 1h24

France/Sweden – visa : 118 226 – 1,85 – Dolby SRD

## **French distribution : Memento Films Distribution**

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## SYNOPSIS

Albert buys his daughter Jeanne an initiatory journey to a European country every year.

For her 17th birthday he chooses a trip to Sweden to look for the lost treasure of a famous Viking. When they arrive in the rented house, it is occupied by Annika and Christine.

The improbable quartet decides to share the place which makes Albert upset and Jeanne quite happy. The forced cohabitation will shatter everyone's beliefs and delusions, and will push all of them into rethinking their lives and starting anew. Leaving behind ancient demons for some, and discovering unexpected feelings for others, they will all come back deeply changed.

# **INTERVIEW WITH ANNA NOVION**

## **How did you begin writing « Grown Ups » ?**

It began with Sweden. The country itself was an important component for me. I had already made two shorts there. I wanted to shoot my first feature in a world I know well, albeit a world in which I do not fully grasp all the social codes.

My mother is Swedish and every summer when I return to the family homestead on an island in the Gothenburg archipelago, I have the sensation that my view of the island, and the country, is new and fresh. That's an important place to be if you are making a film.

## **What kind of story are you telling in « Grown Ups » ?**

It is about the encounter of four people who normally should never have met.

As in my shorts, I am interested in how relationships knit together between people. How they watch and scope each other out, open up and drop their masks little by little over time.

## **And on top of that is the father/daughter theme.**

The idea dates back to 2001. My mother had invited some friends to join us where we were spending the summer in Sweden: a father and daughter and another woman who inspired me to write the part of Christine. What most interested me was to see how the father was bringing up his daughter. He was totally invested in her development, even as he rejected any evidence of her nascent femininity. He did not want to see her grow up, because he understood he would have to take on duties he felt incapable of even facing – things that would embarrass a man of his sort – a man who was still, no doubt, something of a child inside.

## **What prompted you to introduce a Viking legend into an otherwise realistic story?**

To show that at the beginning of the story, father and daughter are two children who are going to grow up. Albert, the father, who takes off with his metal detector looking for Viking treasure, is quite like a kid dreaming of adventure and discovery, even as he considers himself the consummate know-it-all. But basically his quest is absurd. It is a pretext for him to avoid seeing his daughter escaping him. She is no longer a child who can be amused by joining him on treasure hunts.

## **Please describe your characters.**

The first person I wrote was Jeanne, the teenager. She was the clearest and most natural for me to create because I know what it means to be a teenager. The other characters were of an age that I have yet to experience. Once I had found Jeanne, Albert appeared and I resolved that would be two camps among the characters. On one side the single father with his daughter, and in the other camp two women: Christine and Annika.

## **How did you come to choose Jean-Pierre Darroussin to play Albert ?**

He lives and breathes a natural sense of humanity. And the character he plays is always engaging, even if sometimes hard to take, with his rigid ideology and the meticulous control of his daughter's time.

## **And Judith Henry who plays Christine ?**

What I like most about the character of Christine is her touching fragility, which is underscored in Judith's own graceful and delicate silhouette. Christine is someone who affirms her presence by her command of language and determined self-assurance, but being so thin renders her, in the end, quite fragile.

## **How did you find Anaïs Demoustier who plays Jeanne ?**

I saw 60 candidates for the role. Jeanne is a character living full time in a bubble, disconnected and playing by her own rules - living alone, outside her father's moral and intellectual domain. In auditions, Anaïs struck me as perfect, as if I had written the part for her. Her performance is sober and natural, even as it always belies an enormous palette of emotions.

## **Outdoor landscapes have a consistently strong significance in this story.**

Indeed, landscapes play a double, quite paradoxical role – at once comforting and menacing. They bring to the film a singular quality, exotically Swedish, with its incredible light, its stunning leaden-gray countryside, its rocky coastline, the troubling opaqueness of the water at certain times of the day and the beautiful luminosity of the sky at other times. I played with those contrasting aspects of landscape. The characters start out arriving in a pretty red house where everything is just right, wonderfully picturesque, then progressively, as their dispositions evolve and change, the landscape becomes more somber and disturbing.

**You film things as if painting them on canvas.**

I developed my skills in an environment which was heavily influenced by painting. My mother works at restoring art works at Beaubourg.

One of the pictorial references that most influenced me, both in framing and working with light was the work of the late 19th, early 20th century Danish painter Hammershoi, who rendered his work in pastel tones. His work grounded the sense of light I sought in my film. His work is very Swedish. Hammershoi also painted a number of women from behind. I have always been fascinated by photographs and paintings of people framed from behind.

**Did you write the script alone?**

I started out alone for the first year or almost two before writing with Mathieu Robin, who is someone of my generation. The version I had written alone had dialogue that ran a bit all over the place. Mathieu brought a comic, lighthearted touch to the work. He hit on some comic absurdities, like the metal detector. Then, in what became a third stage of writing, I worked with Béatrice Colombier, an older writer with more experience and familiarity with people in their forties and fifties. She enriched the structure of the screenplay.

**What does it mean to you personally now to have finished your first feature?**

I used to say to myself the day I would make my first feature, I would become a woman ! I always told myself that would be the case – that I would become an adult, a grown up

I have come to realize that after making the film I am still exactly the same person I used to be !

**Anna Novion****Scriptwriter and Director**

*Before « Grown Ups », her first feature, Anna Novion directed three student shorts at the university in Saint-Denis, where she completed her masters degree in production. She followed with a DEA degree in theory at Jussieu, where her thesis on Ingmar Bergman was entitled « Anxiety, Guilt and Despair in Bergman's Films ».*

*Swedish by her mother and French by her father, she directed her first short, « Frédérique est française » in Sweden in 2000, at the age of 19 ans. Then the shorts « Chanson entre deux » in 2001 and « On ne prend pas la mer quand on la connaît pas », in 2004.*

# **INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-PIERRE DARROUSSIN**

## **How did you come to be involved in « Grown Ups » ?**

I received the script and then met Anna Novion very soon after, because reading the script I was immediately convinced I should take on the role. As far as I was concerned, it would have been impossible not to have made this film. The storytelling is right on, enchanting and somehow clearly familiar. And the Swedish setting brought a definite advantage, different landscapes, little known in French cinema, brought a certain originality to the work.

## **You already played a single parent in Christine Carrière's « Qui plume la lune ». Did any of that work apply to your portrayal of Albert in « Grown Ups » ?**

Albert has none of the energy or dynamism as did the character in « Qui plume la lune ». That character was not a chronically depressed hysteric. Albert is much more sentimental, sweet and tender – a dreamer. He made me think of a confirmed bachelor. I think I, too, have a bit of the confirmed bachelor in me. For example, I have all my life been fascinated by the study of history, and still harbor the notion that I might one day become a history teacher. Playing Albert, I thought back to my childhood history teachers, who were a bit dusty, living deep in the work of bringing order to the past. I have a certain sympathy and fondness for those characters.

## **The character played by Judith Henry describes Albert as « someone who has trouble accepting that his life is anchored in his body ». Did you play it that way?**

Yes, it's lots of fun to play men with hang-ups.

## **How do you play « men with hang-ups » ?**

You try to be at all times sinking into ill-fitting clothes. Every gesture must be a bit clumsy. Albert is inherently gauche, and this not only in the physical sense. He sometimes speaks too loudly. He is not refined, not always delicate. There are ridiculous aspects of his mannerisms and his wardrobe.

## **What shaping vision did Anna Novion bring to the set of her first feature film ?**

First and foremost, she brought an enthusiastic vision to the work. She was in constant amazement at the possibilities that working on a set to concretize the story she had written afforded her. Nothing about her demeanor was in any way blasé. On the contrary, her febrility pushed her past any moments of doubt, depression or solitude that one must face as a director. She was someone who drew everyone on set toward and into a place of joyfulness.

## **Last question : did you really learn to use a metal detector for the film ?**

Yes. But I must say it is not very complicated. It would have been much harder to row out in a kayak out onto the high seas. The kayak affords nothing in the way of stability!

# 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 **SAINTE-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 Gauthé'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*)...

## Anaïs Demoustier

Born in Lille (France), Anaïs Demoustier is twenty-year-old.

2008	LA BELLE PERSONNE	Christophe Honoré
	DONNE-MOI LA MAIN	Pascal-Alex Vincent
	SOIS SAGE	Juliette Garcias
2007	HELLPHONE	James Hut
	LE PRIX A PAYER	Alexandra Leclère
2006	L'ANNEE SUIVANTE	Isabelle Czajka
	BARRAGE	Raphaël Jacoulot
2003	LE TEMPS DU LOUP	Michael Haneke

## CAST

Albert	Jean-Pierre Darroussin
Jeanne	Anaïs Demoustier
Christine	Judith Henry
Annika	Lia Boysen

## CREW

Director	Anna Novion
Screenplay	Anna Novion, Béatrice Colombier, Mathieu Robin
Image	Pierre Novion
Set	Gert Wibe
Sound	Benjamin Rosier, Boris Chappelle, Christophe Vingtrinier
Editing	Anne Souriau
Music	Pascal Bideau
Production Manager Sweden/France	Martina Eriksdotter, Edmée Millot, Elisabeth Perez
Produced by	Christie Molia (Moteur s'il vous plaît)
Co-produced by	Olivier Guerpillon (DFM Fiktion), Tomas Eskilsson (Film I Väst)

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