

STUDIO CANAL



STUDIO

DOMINIQUE FARRUGIA presents
CLOVIS CORNILLAC MANU PAYET VIRGINIE EFIRA

**PERFECT
DATE**
A FILM BY **ARNAUD LEMORT**
& **DOMINIQUE FARRUGIA**
(L'AMOUR C'EST MIEUX À DEUX)

WITH **ANNELISE HESME LAURENCE ARNÉ SHIRLEY BOUSQUET**
WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF **JONATHAN LAMBERT** AND **LAURENT LAFITTE**

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**STUDIOCANAL
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Emilie Martel
1, place du Spectacle
92863 Issy-les-Moulineaux Cedex 9 France
Tel. : 33 1 71 35 11 30
www.studiocanal.com



SYNOPSIS

Michel (Clovis Cornillac) dreams of meeting the perfect girl by complete chance, just as his parents and grandparents did before him. **Vincent** (Manu Payet) on the other hand is a firm believer in the old adage that men keep their brains in their pants.

These childhood friends with their diametrically opposed views on women discover the limits of their respective opinions when **Angèle** (Virginie Efira) and **Nathalie** (Annelise Hesme) come into their lives.



INTERVIEW WITH

ARNAUD
LEMORT

and
DOMINIQUE
FARRUGIA

WHERE DID YOUR COLLABORATION BEGIN?

Dominique Farrugia: Arnaud and I started working together 12 years ago when he was directing the Franck Dubosc stage show that I was producing. After that, we wrote some pilots for Canal+, also with Franck Dubosc, but they were never commissioned. Then we worked together on 7 d'Or TV awards that I was producing. Since then, we've never lost contact. And one day, Arnaud arrived with a script he'd co-written with Franck Dubosc and I jumped at it.

Arnaud Lemort: The script, which was called "The Woman Whisperer", started out as a romcom parody. But once Dominique and I started working on it, we spent some time rewriting it to make a real story out of it, a story that we believed in. There are only a few parts of the original script remaining.

D.F.: We wanted to tell a real love story, packing in as many jokes as possible. When I decided to produce THE PERFECT DATE, I immediately asked Arnaud to direct it himself. But it is very hard to raise the finance for a first film, for any film for that matter in the current economic climate. But I loved the script and I really wanted this film to be made so I suggested I co-direct it with him. This meant I could get back into directing and help it financially by adding my name to the project. And for Arnaud, who already knew a lot about directing actors, it was also a means of getting behind the camera every day.

A.L.: I am essentially a scriptwriter, but I'd been tempted by directing for a while, even if didn't have the necessary technical skills to make the move. So Dominique's proposition was a real opportunity for me. I could never have dreamed of having such a great companion to launch myself into an adventure like this. I was relieved of all the responsibility for the technical side of the task and was thus able to learn an awful lot. All the more so because throughout the entire adventure, Dominique and I never disagreed on a single point.

D.F.: But we worked very hard during the preparatory phase to arrive at that point. The film's budget was very small so we did everything we could to make sure that on the screen, it never looked cheap.

FROM THERE, HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT CASTING THE ACTORS?

D.F.: Manu was an obvious choice...

A.L.: We had him in mind right from the writing phase because to play the seducer, I don't know any other man who calls every single woman he meets "darling", including his mother! The warmth of La Réunion, the island in the Indian Ocean where he's from, was a real asset to the film!

D.F.: I'd met Clovis many times. To my mind, he's a comic genius who is rather underused in the genre. So I wanted to work with him, and Arnaud did too. So we called him and it all went very easily. He suggested we have lunch once he'd read the script. He said what he liked and what he didn't and asked if we were prepared to change certain things. We said yes and then Arnaud rewrote the character for Clovis. And from then on, it was great. Just as it was with Virginie for that matter. For her role, we wanted a Cameron Diaz...

A.L.: ...and there aren't many of those around! We really wanted beautiful and attractive people on screen, but also people full of humor, and Virginie was the perfect fit.

D.F.: She was also very simple in her approach.

A.L.: Just as with Clovis, I spent a lot of time with Virginie to rework the character for her.

D.F.: That was the bonus for having to spend so much time raising the financing for the movie!

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE ACTORS TO PLAY VIRGINIE EFIRA S CHARACTER S TWO FRIENDS?

D.F.: Annelise Hesme had been waiting for a long time to shoot a Marc Levy film that I was supposed to be producing but which never happened. I adore her as an actor and so I invited her to test for the project and she was great.

A.L.: She instantly embodied the character!

D.F.: As for Laurence Arné, I knew her too because I produce her show and I knew she could be perfect in the role of the girl who you don't think is very pretty in the start but who turns out to be ravishing in the end. But we had her test for lots of different roles...

A.L.: And she was constantly being "upgraded" because each time she inspired us in different directions.

D.F.: That was another advantage to shooting a film with a modest budget. You can offer supporting roles to actors who you aren't used to seeing, like her. And it's great to discover someone like Laurence who has, in my opinion, huge potential in comedy.

A.L.: In fact, this film is a first for a lot of our actors – the first appearance for her, the first major role for Manu and Virginie etc. – and throughout the shoot, you could feel this incredible desire from them which of course inspired us.

D.F.: Just like the way they truly loved their characters.

DID WRITING FEMALE ROLES PROVE PARTICULARLY COMPLEX FOR YOU?

A.L.: It's very hard in fact because when I thought I'd already got the dialogues sorted out, I realized, in talking to girls, that I could go a lot further with them. In fact, we ended up pretty timid in terms of the dialogues of the female roles.

D.F.: But here again, right from the first reading, our actresses gave us some great feedback and we developed them together to make them more accurate in the end.

A.L.: Like Shirley Bousquet, who came up with an improvised imitation of a rattlesnake during her casting that we decided to write into the film because it made us fall about with laughter!

D.F.: She's another actress I wanted to work with because she has a vulnerability that I adore. We absolutely wanted to avoid making her character some kind of moronic bimbo. With her, you believe totally in this secretary who is in love with her boss, played by Clovis, who is overflowing with kindness and clumsiness. She's got the body of a goddess but she's really fragile which makes her really sweet.

A.L.: Her little mistakes are supposed to be touching and not irritating, and Shirley plays that to perfection.

YOU SAY THAT GETTING TOGETHER THE FINANCING FOR THE FILM WASN'T EASY. DO YOU THINK THE POLITICALLY INCORRECT TONE OF THE FILM COULD HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT?

D.F.: THE PERFECT DATE is indeed outside the traditional framework for French comedies. But that's exactly what Arnaud and I were intending to do. We wanted to make something a little abrasive that would make other people laugh as much as it made us laugh. I was always encouraging him to push the envelope a little further. Laughing about disability for example. Disabled people are like anybody – they want to have a laugh and not to be made special cases. And given the choice, they'd prefer they had easier access to the metro and that we laugh as we do here with them rather than not daring to do it at all.

A.L.: I think that you can allow yourself some jokes that go a little further when, alongside, you are telling a solid story with solid characters as we're trying to do here. Plus, when you start laughing with people and not at them, you can laugh at anything!

THE PERFECT DATE IS A BUDDY MOVIE, A LOVE STORY AND A COMEDY. WAS FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN THESE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS A SIMPLE TASK?

D.F.: There are two jobs here. One is writing, with 18 different versions, each one involving a game of writers' ping pong between us. Then on set, taking advantage of the fact there are two of us to re-read the scenes each evening for the following day, constantly modifying things. For example, we had to be very careful not to overload the story with jokes and thus prevent the development of the amorous tension and the emotion that goes with that. And because it's a real buddy movie, we were really careful to not make exclusive jokes that would only make us laugh. Showing the film in parallel and thus seeing what worked or not, virtually in real time, really helped us go off in different directions.

A.L.: I'd also like to say that it was a real pleasure to make a romantic comedy for a first film. It's a genre that Dominique and I both love. So of course, we both were particularly attentive to the love story element. The hardest thing was making sure everything stayed on track; that the crossing paths of the two principle characters – the terrible flirt who becomes romantic and the romantic who attempts to take up flirting – are carried through right to the end. But sharing the same references and desires with Dominique made the task a much simpler one.

D.F.: Then with the directing, we wanted the actors to perform in the most natural way possible so that the laughter would come out of the fact they were playing the situations straight. But we insisted that the dialogues contained no "ums", "huhs" or "you knows" – in complete contrast to real life, they contained no hesitations.

A.L.: As with the English-language comedies we adore, we also worked very hard on the supporting roles (Jonathan Lambert, Laurent Lafitte etc.) so they wouldn't be relegated to the simple rank of foil but so they fully exist from end to end even if they are only there for three or four scenes. All the characters in the film had to feed into the story.

YOU CHOSE ERIC GUICHARD AS YOUR CINEMATOGRAPHER, SOMEONE NOT OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH COMEDIES. WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO WORK WITH HIM?

D.F.: I sought him out simply because I love his work. He's one of the 10 best camera operators in France and I think he enjoyed making a comedy and working with us. We immediately agreed on our aim: To make something beautifully lit but to work fast. I wanted to make a comedy a little out of the ordinary by working very carefully and specifically on the image. And to do that, it was a delight to have the man who lit the Himalayas light our movie. I love that comparison! Working with him was a constant pleasure.

A.L.: He's the man who says yes! He always came up with a solution to our requests with a smile and with enthusiasm.

D.F.: And we didn't have to make a lot of changes on set because we totally divided up the film with him. We worked up-stream on the fact that the image had to be shiny and golden with a picture postcard vision of Paris. I think it's a wonderful city and I didn't want to show it through a single gray day. But it's true that if we wanted to change something, he was always on hand to do it.



HOW DID YOU SHARE THE TASK OF DIRECTING THE ACTORS?

A.L.: To simplify matters, we shared out the roles beforehand. There was a boss on the set for the crew because you need one and that was Dominique. And he asked me to direct the actors. So we started out from there to make everybody feel comfortable during the first week. Then once our roles had been established, we certainly didn't stop ourselves interfering in each other's work.

D.F.: I think the actors soon understood that we knew what we wanted, that we were on the same wavelength and that we had done a lot of preparatory work. From then on, it was very simple. But we were lucky to be working with actors who immediately gave more than what was requested of them. I like working with two cameras. It lets the actors improvise and go beyond the text without that causing a problem for the editing. It's ideal, for example, for someone like Clovis, who never offers the same thing from take to take. Moreover, it's in digging out things in this manner that he delivered his character to us. In the beginning, we were a little afraid that this man who dreams of the perfect encounter would be a little over-romantic. But right from the start, he brought something very masculine, very virile and a little crazy around the edges to the role. He did warn us when he agreed to do the film, saying, "I'll be 100%! 100% bad or 100% good but never 60%!".

DID YOU REWRITE MUCH OF THE FILM DURING EDITING?

D.F.: There were two phases. One phase of pre-editing which we emerged from very depressed, as always happens, whatever the film. Then we talked to Sylvie Gadmer (CHOUCHOU, SAGAN, CHANGING SIDES etc.) who is an editor I love. She immediately understood where we wanted to go and as Arnaud and I had decided right at the start to take three weeks off to let the project settle in our minds, she took that time to rework the film and that sorted us out.

A.L.: It was her idea to draw everything together at that point around Michel's character, which then set everything else in motion.

D.F.: Very early on we'd decided to dedicate a lot of time to the editing. And it turned out to be very useful to be able to test things and refine things down to the smallest detail without any pressure. For example, having seen GRAN TORINO, I wanted to make a film with no opening credits like Clint Eastwood did, taking you straight into the film. We tried it out and it works perfectly I think.

FOR THE MUSIC, YOU CHOSE EXISTING SONGS RATHER THAN AN ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK. WHY WAS THAT?

A.L.: English-language romantic comedies which are references in the genre are always accompanied by the hits of the moment which anchors the film in its time and gives it a freshness of the moment. You don't get the same result with a score.

D.F.: I don't know where we could have put a film score. I start with the principle that if you put comedy to music, you can't hear the dialogue very well and you miss the point of the scene. Songs don't have the same effect and they better underline the romantic moments. Nothing works as well during those moments as a song that is familiar to you.

A.L.: We were also very lucky that Thomas Dutronc composed an original song for us that you can hear during the closing credits.

D.F.: I called him one day, asking if he would read the script with a view to writing a song. He read it, and first said he couldn't see anything. Then very shortly afterwards, he called me to say that he had something to send me. We listened to his song on set. We loved it – it's a real gift!

FOCUS ON

SOPHIE
VOUZELAUD
(HÉLÈNE)

Dominique Farrugia: Given my fight to integrate disabled people into “real” life, I was absolutely determined that the role of Virginie Efira’s deaf sister be played by someone who is deaf in real life. Then I remembered Sophie’s appearance on Miss France. I found her extremely touching so I invited her to test and she turned out to be the best. And the great thing is that she’d always wanted to be an actress but thought that she’d never make it because of her disability. She’s actually extremely talented and I think the film shows that. In any case, she realized her dream and I think she portrayed some amazing emotion. She worked with a coach upstream to prepare for the role and in particular, being in a

wheelchair which, thank God, she doesn’t need in real life. So she learnt how to move around in a chair. At the word “Action!” she showed no hesitation and no fear.

Arnaud Lemort: Working with her was simplicity itself. In the end, she gave us much more than we asked of her. The sweet thing is that the actor who plays her boyfriend in the film had learnt sign language for a stage play so he was both our translator and her coach.



INTERVIEW WITH



**GLOVIS
CORNILLAC**
(MICHEL)

WHAT MADE YOU AGREE TO TAKE ON YOUR ROLE IN THE PERFECT DATE?

For quite a while, Dominique Farrugia and I had wanted to work together, without necessarily having articulated that sentiment directly. Then one day, he gave me the script of THE PERFECT DATE, written by Arnaud Lemort. I was instantly knocked out by the quality of the writing, the openly exaggerated aspect of certain situations and also by the treatment of the women in the film. In too many comedies, you see them treated as bimbos, or just as foils to the male hero. But not here, and that to me symbolizes the fair, natural and modern tone of the ensemble. Then the subsequent meeting I had with Dominique and Arnaud was decisive. Right from the very first sequence of reading, I saw their capacity to respond to propositions that their actors might make. I'm not saying all our ideas were good but they were immediately very open to those that made sense to their story.

WHAT DID YOU PARTICULARLY LIKE ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER, MICHEL?

I have a lot of attachment to people with flaws in a general sense. And Michel is full of them. On the surface he seems pretty self-confident but he is obsessed with this idea that love is down to chance and that's the only way he's going to meet the love of his life. He gets this from his parents who it seems, met each other in this manner and who have since enjoyed a fabulous relationship. We've all got things like that in our lives – let's call them family flaws – that you just have to live with. I liked the idea of playing in a

comedy with these kinds of family millstones you have to drag around, exploring that flaw shared by many, pushing the boundary a little way but not too much. I've done a lot of that in comedies where it seemed essential in order that they work as a whole. Here, it's different. Of course you have to push the boundary a little – because it's not about realism – but just enough so that you're not too far from reality. As an actor, I like moving from one universe to another, from the extreme to the subtle, from the moment when I feel I am being looked at and directed.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE WORKING WITH ARNAUD AND DOMINIQUE?

They shared out the responsibilities perfectly. To put it simply, Dominique was more in charge of the pure creation of the film, with the choice of the framing, for example. Arnaud, who'd written the script, was more in charge of directing the actors. But it was all done with a sense of permanent collaboration because at no time did I see any conflict between them. And in particular, they continued on set what they had demonstrated during our readings: Complete reactivity over any suggestions we might make in terms of the acting. Of course, they didn't say yes to everything, but they jumped at the ideas we had with such enthusiasm that it could only inspire the actors. It was a joyful collaboration.

SO THERE WAS A LOT OF SPACE FOR IMPROVISATION ON THIS FILM?

That always seems a strange term to me. On a film, you never really improvise in the sense that you always have a base to work from. In fact, you're adding to an existing screenplay through the inspiration you might have. Moreover, invention is the basis of our work, especially in comedy. But in order for it to work, you always have to have a ready reply, with your acting partners as with your directors and that, I repeat, was the case here. For example, in the first dinner scene with Virginie Efira when, thinking she's leading me up the garden path when she says she's got a disabled sister, I commit a huge gaffe by mocking her sister with an outrageous imitation. In the script, I wasn't supposed to behave like that. I suggested it and Arnaud and Dominique jumped on it saying that it was possible to go that far with politically incorrect humor...

THAT POLITICALLY INCORRECT TONE SEEMS TO DOMINATE THE PERFECT DATE...

Yes, and that's dangerous, in the best sense of the term. As soon as you offer something a little out of the ordinary, there's a real danger of getting knocked back straight away. And that's a paradox: Comedies are often criticized for being too sensible but it's only rarely that one looks kindly on the original attempts. Yet that's what I like as an actor, and in THE PERFECT DATE, I think it works. In any case, I felt people watching it went with it and liked those politically incorrect scenes that are rare in a mainstream comedy.

HAD YOU ALREADY MET MANU PAYET, WITH WHOM YOU FORM THE COMPLICIT AND COMPLEMENTARY STARRING PAIR IN THE PERFECT DATE?

No, I didn't really know him. We'd just crossed paths once when he did some sketches for the promotion of ASTERIX AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES. We met for the first reading of the script with the whole cast and right from that moment, I realized we were going to have a lot of fun together. He's an extremely humble guy but also really lively, responsive and generous. I see a great career for him.

AND WHAT APPEALED TO YOU ABOUT YOUR MAIN LEADING LADY, VIRGINIE EFIRA, WHO PLAYS THE WOMAN WITH WHOM YOUR CHARACTER FALLS IN LOVE?

Her freshness. It's wonderful to see someone like her come along. And what I found particularly interesting and unique about her is that she never plays the little girl, never simpers. She thus plays a key part in setting the modern tone of the film.

ON THE SHOOT, WERE THERE CERTAIN SCENES YOU WERE NERVOUS ABOUT AND OTHERS YOU WERE IMPATIENT TO SHOOT?

I don't think about those kinds of things when I'm filming. It's more when I see the finished film that I experience that kind of sensation. Because no scene means anything on its own: They only take on any meaning through what comes before and after them. What makes me happy is the adventure in its entirety; working, shooting every day and telling a story.

WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION ON SEEING THE FINISHED FILM?

On a set, I never watch the play back of scenes between takes, or the rushes. That's because when I agree to do a film, I give it my trust. And I know that my director's take on things will always be more right than mine. It's what they think that's important. I can't stand to hear my voice on an answerphone and I hate mirrors, so I'd be the last person to judge myself on a set. I don't want that to change the way I shoot a scene. Afterwards, when I see the finished film, I always experience the same disappointment: I see myself and not the character despite the fact that while filming, I always feel like I'm someone else. Over the years, I've learned to get over that frustration and from the first moment I see a film I've made, I manage to see it in its entirety. And here, that entirety knocked my socks off.



INTERVIEW WITH



MANU
PAYET
(VINCENT)

YOU'VE KNOWN DOMINIQUE FARRUGIA AND ARNAUD LEMORT FOR A LONG TIME. DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THEM?

I met Dominique five years ago through a mutual friend, Henri de Lorme, whom I'd asked to persuade Dominique to produce my stage show. He agreed to join me in this adventure when I was just starting out. Arnaud was one of the first buddies I made when I arrived from La Réunion. I met him nine years ago in radio where he was working already when I was taken on. He was part of the morning team, from 6-9am, that I joined a little later on. I talked a lot with Arnaud who was already into scriptwriting and had directed Franck Dubosc. Arnaud was also the first person to advise me to quit radio and throw myself into one man shows because he'd understood it was the stage that appealed to me more than anything. He was also the guy who introduced me what became one of my all-time favorite films: THE KING OF COMEDY. In people terms, those two guys are amazing.

SO IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TURN DOWN A JOINT PROJECT FROM THEM...

Luckily, I liked the project because it absolutely was the script that was impossible to refuse! Nonetheless, the role of Vincent wasn't written for me. But it was a project I'd followed as I was regularly talking to Arnaud while he was writing it. But often, the closer you are to someone, the less you think of them for a role. It seemed logical to me to go fantasize elsewhere. Then one day, Arnaud fixed up to have lunch with me and that's when he told me he totally saw me in the role of who he was calling Jean-Paul back then. He explained he'd only just realized and he'd spoken to Dominique who was in agreement. I was surprised, of course. I didn't necessarily see myself as a skirt-chasing lawyer who suddenly gets sick of it and decides to put his affairs in order. So I said OK to Arnaud, but said he'd have to change the name: Jean-Paul didn't sound to me like someone in their thirties. So he went with Vincent. I'd have loved him to be called Vincent Hanna like Al Pacino's character in HEAT, but because Arnaud is nuts about Tarantino, he's called Vincent Vega like John Travolta in PULP FICTION.

WHAT EXACTLY WAS IT THAT MADE YOU ACCEPT THEIR PROPOSITION?

The story and the role that they entrusted me with, of course. And the fact that it's one of my first big roles so the idea of shooting with such close friends as Arnaud and Dominique was very reassuring and I liked that. Everything was very simple and easy. My only worry was whether I'd make a credible lawyer.

HOW DID YOU CONSTRUCT THE CHARACTER?

In the beginning, I thought I was too young. But when I put on my suit and my lawyer's robes, I saw that I could be very credible. But I still needed help because I had a real problem of legitimacy in this role. I simply talked to Arnaud to find some examples of how he'd talk, the deliberately cynical tone he sometimes uses. It's a real stroke of luck to have the scriptwriter constantly by your side to go over certain lines so you can master them better. It was a really unexpected luxury! Both Arnaud and Dominique were constantly open to my suggestions so I was able to adjust the character to fit me, without, of course, betraying their creation. They were like that with all the actors. You had the feeling Arnaud and Dominique wanted to slip a few elements of the people they'd chosen to play them into each character. And that really helps your self-confidence. There was one really decisive scene to my mind – the one where Vincent goes to see Nathalie, played by Annelise – to say that he's changed, that his love for her is what counts most and that he'll never go chasing skirt anywhere else anymore. If you don't believe in that scene, the film stops there. So I thought long and hard about it and then I drew upon my instincts and my two directors in whom I had total confidence. If it suited them, it suited me, even if I was, of course, suffering all kinds of doubt! I knew they'd be exacting about it and in two or three takes, the scene was in the can.

HOW DO THOSE TWO WORK TOGETHER?

Dominique is obsessed with technical and technological things so on set, that was his area. Arnaud was more focused on directing the actors. But they were in constant consultation of course. Arnaud has done quite a lot of directing, particularly with comedy, so he knows how to find the right words. All the more so in my case because we're pals: We don't have to use many words to understand each other.

THE PERFECT DATE ALSO GAVE YOU THE CHANCE TO WORK WITH CLOVIS CORNILLAC FOR THE FIRST TIME. WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT YOUR COLLABORATION?

I very quickly learned that I was going to be able to work with him and that it would be a lot of fun. I love his work. I've always thought he was brilliant so I was impatient to work with him and everything went like a dream! Very soon, I realized I'd made a new friend. The guy is generous, he has an open ear and he doesn't only focus on his own role and his performance. He's a very hard worker and I was impressed by the speed at which he understands things on set. Of course, he owes this to the his wealth of experience, but also to the fact that he doesn't rest on his laurels. He'll take things on board, even from someone as inexperienced as I am. He's always right on the ball, permanently ready to be surprised and we very quickly became close, and have seen each other a lot since shooting finished. Acting with him is like swimming next to Michael Phelps: It pushes you to produce your best crawl! It constantly pushes you to do your best.

AND WHAT DID YOU ENJOY ABOUT WORKING WITH YOUR TWO FEMALE PARTNERS, ANNELISE HESME AND VIRGINIE EFIRA?

With Annelise, it was a great laugh. I liked her levity which played things down and made it less stressful. That was fortunate for me because we had to shoot a love scene which didn't make it into the final cut. Obviously, I wasn't very comfortable with it and if we hadn't gotten on so well, I'd never have experienced those scenes in the way I did.

Unlike Annelise, I already knew Virginie before this shoot, but I didn't know how amazing she was going to be. Often, I'd hang around on set after I'd finished my scenes to watch her. In the scene when she gets dumped by Clovis in the street just as with the one in which she finds him with Shirley Bousquet and tells him exactly what she thinks of him, she totally blew my mind. And both times, that happened right from the very first take. It was a brilliant move to launch herself fully into acting. And she's somebody I really like.

WAS YOUR MOVE FROM ONE-MAN SHOW TO A MOVIE SET A TRICKY ONE TO HANDLE?

Honestly, no. I appreciate them both. I really liked meeting up with the gang from THE PERFECT DATE every morning and working towards a story. In the same way, I love being a solo yachtsman on the ocean of the theater stage. And to go from one experience to the other I just have to switch into team player mode. By that I mean that as someone who laughs a lot, I have to not ruin other people's work with my crazy laughter. But I quickly realized that Clovis was like me so we had a lot of crazy laughs and we shared the responsibility for that between us.

TO FINISH, CAN YOU SHARE WITH US THE SCENE YOU WERE MOST ANXIOUS ABOUT SHOOTING?

I was a little nervous about the scene on the basketball court with Angèle's disabled sister's team, where I'm supposed to show everyone that I'm a hard-bitten pro who is a bad loser because I'm far from being that good. It made me laugh so much when I read it that I was worried I wouldn't be up to it. Plus there was a whole song and dance about setting up the scene because we were shooting in a sports hall with a real team of disabled basketball players who weren't used to being in front of a camera. So the responsibility for the scene fell to me and in the end, I absolutely loved shooting it and didn't change a single word of the dialogue because it was so totally spot-on.



INTERVIEW WITH

VIRGINIE EFIRA (ANGÈLE)



TELL US ABOUT HOW YOU BECAME INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT...

I think it was after having seen me in a TV show that Dominique Farrugia thought of me for the role of Angèle. But he only offered it to me after having given me the script to read. When I did, I was immediately seduced by the originality of the writing. It was a little bit cruel and it contained a description of male-female relationships had a lot less of the gloss one is used to seeing and hearing in a popular comedy. Meeting Dominique and Arnaud simply reinforced this first impression. I immediately understood that they viewed the script as a base from which to develop the film together. And that started to happen right from our very first joint reading of it, led by Clovis and immediately followed by Manu. Right through to the end of the shoot, we never stopped widening out and expanding the script through our suggestions which Arnaud and Dominique jumped at whilst never losing the framework of their story. It really drove all of us, seeing them as enthusiastic as they were for it. Moreover, our two directors were our first audience, and were positive but never complacent. So the whole experience was handled in a very instinctive manner. We had to be careful to never lose the truth of the sentiments linking our characters, or to make them seem faked when we were stressing the comic side of things. And on this point, seeing Dominique and Arnaud full of assurance, knowing that they knew exactly where they were going with it, was a constant source of confidence.

HOW DID THEY DIVIDE UP THE WORK BETWEEN THEM ON SET?

To be honest, I had my concerns about how having two directors would work out. But on set, that immediately evaporated. Dominique and Arnaud always talked with a single voice even if they had clearly divided up the tasks. To sum up, let's say that Dominique dealt with setting up the scenes and setting out their basic intentions, whereas Arnaud was responsible for setting this score to music, constantly tweaking the composition where necessary. Because Arnaud wrote the script for THE PERFECT

DATE, he was the one we went to when we had a question about the dialogues, and we went to Dominique with questions about how we should play it. In all, the two were totally complementary and there was no power struggle between them.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR CHARACTER, ANGELE?

Often, when cinema tackles the issue of seduction between men and women, I have the funny feeling that fear is a male prerogative. It reminds me of an interview with Jacques Brel that scared the hell out of me when I was a kid, when he said he saw women as good nest-makers and men as adventurers. To me, I think that Angèle is afraid of emotional commitment and focuses on everything else – her work, her family and her disabled sister – rather than facing up to that anxiety. And of course, meeting Michel is very disturbing for her. Until then, she thinks her life is complete without love and suddenly, everything she thought was true in order to protect herself crumbles and she realizes how blind she has been. Her little life falls to pieces, and there's nothing she can do about it. She was too sweet-natured and because of that, for example, her friends offload all their problems onto her. This is perhaps logical because Angèle is constantly showing others that she had no weaknesses. So the love that comes knocking at her door allows her to move forwards and to stop lying to herself. Michel is like a catalyst.

HOW DID YOU CONSTRUCT THE CHARACTER?

When I first read the script, I immediately understood Angèle's fragility and lack of confidence. Because of this, she can say something out loud when deep down, she thinks the opposite, and then kick herself when she gets home. Playing a woman who is constantly pretending to be something she's not offers some great opportunities for comedy, in particular when she wants people to think Michel isn't getting to her when really, her heart is pounding.

I very quickly integrated that facet of her personality. But my own feminist nature prevented me understanding why Angèle accepts certain situations without flinching. Her reactions in those instances are completely foreign to me. So I had to discuss it with Arnaud and Dominique so they could explain to me in detail which part of her personality pushes her to behave in such a way so that I could get totally into her character.

WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT WORKING WITH CLOVIS CORNILLAC?

I'd never met him before I first read the script. But just in terms of his comedy, I loved him in registers as different as those he delivers in *MENSONGES ET TRAHISONS* and *BRICE DE NICE*. Shooting with him only served to underscore this opinion. Clovis is extremely inventive and has impressively high standards. But it's that serious side to him that means he can create a framework in which he can express an incredible freedom of performance. Comedy is a demanding practice that requires a lot of technique. Clovis has mastery of that at his fingertips. Moreover, he has a real awareness of everything that's happening on set, both in technical and people terms. What he brought to this film is a result of all that. He manages to be incredibly funny whilst radiating a real tenderness. But when I read the script, I wondered how people would be able to believe in a character like Michel who has such a fantasy about the perfect relationship. It would have been easy to take him for a nutcase because of the way he thinks like a 12-year-old who still believes in fairy tales, as if he's never suffered any trauma. Clovis gave a marvelous portrayal of that naivety, a little pathologically but without losing his masculine side. That was very impressive.

YOU SHARED FEWER SCENES WITH MANU PAYET BUT WHAT DO YOU RETAIN FROM YOUR COLLABORATION WITH HIM?

I've known Manu's work for some time now, mainly having seen his show. This was his first major movie role and he demonstrates here the precision and comedy that I immediately fell in love with in his work. Being immediately credible as a lawyer wasn't something that came naturally and yet you immediately believe in him. And it was very reassuring for me to have him on the shoot, even if we did have very few scenes together. This was only my second film so I'm not very confident when I have to throw myself into it and start acting. But he was so kind and the way he looks at his co-actors even when he's not interacting with them really helped me. I'm really keen to work with him again.

WHICH SCENE WERE YOU MOST ANXIOUS ABOUT AND WHICH ONE WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO SHOOTING?

They are one and the same! The scene with the first meeting with Michel. Angèle talks to him with the deep naivety she uses to write her children's stories. It wasn't at all natural for me to play because in my mind, throwing loads of detail at him meant she'd very quickly bore him. So I put my cynicism and personal irony aside to play that scene straight. And it was at that moment that I realized I'd found the character. That explains why I was so keen to play that scene which scared me: I was aware that it was key to my future work on the film. Angèle is totally invested in what she says, and has no second thoughts. I also loved shooting the scene when she meets up again with Michel in the park, when she sees that he's named his dog Angèle. I like it when absurdity is pushed to the limit. I was able to play with the hesitation and dithering this absurdity provokes between Angèle who doesn't understand and Michel, who is embarrassed. It's all acted straight in a very realistic way.





BEHIND THE CAMERA

DOMINIQUE FARRUGIA GO-DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

DIRECTOR

- 2010** THE PERFECT DATE
co-directed with Arnaud Lemort
- 1999** INFLUENCE PEDDLING
- 1996** DELPHINE 1 – YVAN 0

PRODUCER

- 2009** DAY OFF *by Frédéric Berthe*
- 2008** LONDON MON AMOUR *by Lorraine Levy*
- 2002** MONSIEUR BATIGNOLE *by Gérard Jugnot*
- 2001** VIDOCQ *by Pitof*
- 2000** MOST PROMISING YOUNG ACTRESS *by Gérard Jugnot*
- 1999** MY FRIENDS *by Michel Hazanavicius*
- 1998** PAPERAZZI *by Alain Berberian*
- 1996** LE CLONE *by Fabio Conversi*
- 1996** DELPHINE 1 – YVAN 0 *by Dominique Farrugia*

GLOVIS CORNILLAC MICHEL

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

- 2010** 600 KILOS D'OR PUR *by Eric Besnard*
THE PERFECT DATE
by Dominique Farrugia and Arnaud Lemort
- 2009** PROTÉGER ET SERVIR *by Eric Lavaine*
LA SAINTE VICTOIRE *by François Favrat*
- 2008** BELLAMY *by Claude Chabrol*
FAUBOURG 36 *by Christophe Barratier*
THE PROTOCOL *by Thomas Vincent*
- 2007** ASTERIX AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES *by Frédéric Forestier*
EDEN LOG *by Franck Vestiel*
SCORPION *by Julien Séri*
- 2006** THE SNAKE *by Eric Barbier*
POLTERGAY *by Eric Lavaine*
LES BRIGADES DU TIGRE *by Jérôme Cornuau*
- 2005** GRIS BLANC *by Karim Dridi*
LE CACTUS *by Michel Munz et Gérard Bitton*
SKY FIGHTERS *by Gérard Pirès*
AU SUIVANT *by Jeanne Biras*
BRICE DE NICE *by James Huth*
- 2004** A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
by Jean-Pierre Jeunet
GILLES'S WIFE *by Frédéric Fonteyne*
MENSONGES ET TRAHISONS ET PLUS SI
AFFINITÉS... *by Laurent Tirard*
MALABAR PRINCESS *by Gilles Legrand*
LE VERT PARADIS *by Emmanuel Bourdieu*
JE T'AIME, JE T'ADORE *by Bruno Bontzolakis*

IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA

- 2003** THE VERY MERRY WIDOWS *by Catherine Corsini*
APRÈS LA PLUIE, LE BEAU TEMPS *by Nathalie Schmidt*
NICKEL AND DIME *by Sam Karmann*
MALEFIQUE *by Eric Valette*
A GREAT LITTLE BUSINESS *by Eric Veniard*
- 2002** CARNAGES *by Delphine Gleize*
A PRIVATE AFFAIR *by Guillaume Nicloux*
- 2001** GREGOIRE MOULIN VS HUMANITY
by Artus de Penguern
- 2000** LA MERE CHRISTAIN *by Myriam Boyer*
- 1999** LES VILAINS *by Xavier Durringer*
KARNAVAL *by Thomas Vincent*
- 1997** OUVREZ LE CHIEN *by Pierre Dugowson*
- 1995** MARIE-LOUISE OU LA PERMISSION *by Manuel Fleche*
- 1993** PETAIN *by Jean Marbeuf*
LES AMOUREUX (LES CŒURS DE PIERRE)
by Catherine Corsini
- 1989** SUIVEZ CET AVION *by Patrice Ambard*
- 1988** LE TRÉSOR DES ÎLES CHIENNES *by Jacques Ossang*
LES ANNÉES SANDWICHES *by Pierre Boutron*
MALDONNE *by John Berry*
THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING
by Philip Kaufman
- 1985** HORS-LA-LOI *by Robin Davis*

IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA

MANU PAYET VINCENT FILMOGRAPHY

- 2010** THE PERFECT DATE
by Dominique Farrugia and Arnaud Lemort
- 2009** TOUT CE QUI BRILLE
by Géraldine Nakache & Hervé Mimran
- 2009** DAY OFF *by Frédéric Berthe*
- 2009** KUNG FU PANDA
by Mark Osborne & John Stevenson
Voice of: «Po le panda»
- 2008** COCO *by Gad Elmaleh*
- 2008** HELLO GOODBYE *by Graham Guit*

VIRGINIE EFIRA ANGELE FILMOGRAPHY

- 2010** THE PERFECT DATE
by Dominique Farrugia and Arnaud Lemort
- 2009** LA CHANCE DE MA VIE *by Nicolas Cuche*
- 2009** LE SIFFLEUR *by Philippe Lefebvre*
- 2008** MAX & CO *by Samuel and Frédéric Guillaume*
Voice of: «Kathy»





CAST

Clovis Cornillac
 Virginie Efira
 Manu Payet
 Annelise Hesme
 Laurence Arné
 Shirley Bousquet
 Jonathan Lambert
 Laurent Lafitte
 Sophie Vozeldaud
 Emmanuel Suarez
 Lancelot Roch
 Marie Vincent
 Diane Dassigny
 Amandine Dewasmes
 Etienne Draber
 Monique Martial

Michel
 Angèle
 Vincent
 Nathalie
 Claudine
 Swan
 Ariel
 Sylvain
 Hélène
 Romain
 Arvid
 Michel's mother
 Stella
 Barmaid
 Michel's grandfather
 Michel's grandmother

CREW

Directors

Dominique Farrugia
Arnaud Lemort

Based on an original screenplay by

Franck Dubosc
and Arnaud Lemort

Adaptation and Dialogues

Arnaud Lemort

Producer

Dominique Farrugia - Few

Coproduction

StudioCanal/France 2 Ciména/
Les Trois 8

Head of finance

Isabelle Kabakdjian - Few

Head of development

Charly Delwart - Few

Executive producer

Dominique Brunner

Production manager

Kader Djedra

First assistant director

Louna Morad

Second assistant director

Céline Bailbled

Deputy assistant director

Alice Pic

Script supervisor

Laurence Lemaitre

Casting

Michael Laguens

Production administrator

Roland Vallet

Production secretary

Claude Varis

Location manager

Grégoire Daure

Director of photography

Eric Guichard

Steadicam operator

Benoît Theunissen

Set photography

Making of

Sound

Costume design

Costumer

Make-up

Hairdressing

Production design

Construction coordinator

Gaffer

Key grip

Animal trainer

Post-production manager

Film editing

Sound editing

Dialogue editor

Foley artist

Sound re-recording mixer

Musical consultant

Texts and interviews

Translation

Pascal Chantier

François Breniaux

Marc-Antoine Beldent

Véronique Perier

Béatrice Cousson

Mabi Anzalone

Géraldine Kechichian

Katy Jabes

Tony Rocchetti

Louise Marzaroli

Laurent Hottois

Christian Vicq

Jeff Garreau

Patrick Pittavino

Sophie Floderer - Few

Sylvie Gadmer

Guillaume Bouchateau

Matthieu Bricout

Pascal Chauvin

Dominique Gaborieau

Valérie Lindon

Re Flexe Music

Thierry Cheze

Anna McQueen