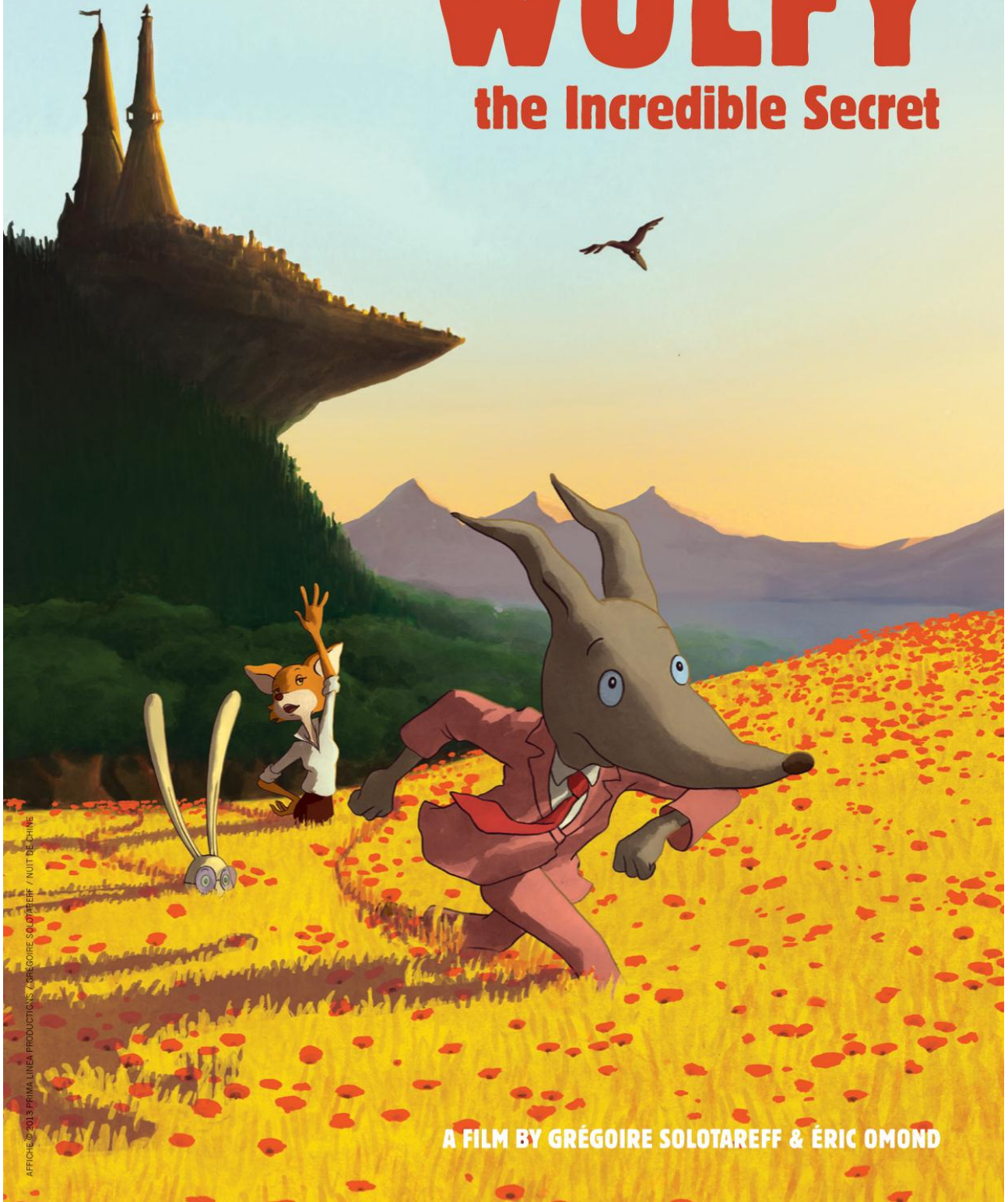


 **64^e** Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Generation

PRIMA LINEA PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS

WOLFY

the Incredible Secret



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A FILM BY GRÉGOIRE SOLOTAREFF & ÉRIC OMOND

Prima Linea Productions presents

WOLFY, THE INCREDIBLE SECRET

a film by Grégoire Solotareff

directed by Eric Ormond



Release date: December 18th, 2013

France – Animation – 1.85 – 80 minutes

wolfytheincrediblesecret-themovie.com

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SYNOPSIS

Wolfy is a wolf. Tom is a rabbit. Though it may seem surprising, they've been inseparable since childhood. But Wolfy, who thought he was an orphan, learns from a gipsy that his mother is still alive. So the two friends set out to find her in the principality of Wolfenberg, the Land of the Wolves. They arrive right in the middle of the Carne Festival, an annual gathering of the world's most renowned carnivores.

Will Wolfy and Tom's friendship survive in this land where herbivores inevitably end up as the day's main dish du jour?

What incredible secret lies behind Loulou's birth?

AN INTERVIEW WITH GRÉGOIRE SOLOTAREFF

TWICE UPON A TIME...

Grégoire Solotareff: Loulou/Wolffy is a character I created 25 years ago. Back then, this first album was a ticket to artistic freedom: my work up until then had been confined to a narrow-minded illustration workshop and I had been dreaming of the pleasure of drawing with simple and direct lines. I finalized him in twenty-four hours, driven by energy, spontaneity and a good dose of naiveté! There are so many things we wouldn't dare try if it weren't for naiveté – isn't it true? The album did well and Loulou/Wolffy ended up escaping me, so to speak.

Ten years ago, when I started working on an animated film with Valérie Schermann and Christophe Jankovic, we were already thinking about a feature-length. But for strategic reasons as well as financing, we decided to start with a short format: *Loulou and four other wolves*. Then there was the *U* adventure, which, I believe, drew attention to our work. We came back, ten years later, to our initial desire to do a feature-length film, which became *Wolfy, the incredible secret*.

From the onset, the idea was to make the characters grow up. There were several versions of the screenplay – the first written with my son Emmanuel during the course of a year and a half - before getting back together with Jean-Luc Fromental, who had already been part of the team for *Loulou and four little wolves*. The next part of the process took just as much time. Jean-Luc has an approach that is entirely complementary to mine: he knows more about screenwriting codes than I do as well as the narrative flair that is specific to animation. In the work process we alternated being Tom and Loulou/Wolffy. Like two faces of the same person.

The movie starts on a drifting boat, with Loulou/Wolffy and Tom aboard. It's a dreamlike beginning, a fantasy also. It all started with a phrase from Renoir, who said that we are corks adrift at sea. I also like the idea of a powerful occurrence that upsets everyday life. It's the starting point for Loulou's coming of age journey.

LICENSE TO DREAM

Grégoire Solotareff: Jean-Luc and I wanted to fill Wolfy's quest with as many endearing characters as milestones. It wasn't just to quench our thirst for creation, but to flesh out the narrative thread. For example, the variety of accents in the story comes from the mix of nationalities that echo within Jean-Luc and myself. We are both from Eastern and Western cultures: he is, in a sense, a child of Tunisia; me Russia and Lebanon. I believe this comes through in our sensibilities.

At the heart of *Wolfy, the incredible secret*, is the search for one's roots: mine are Middle Eastern and Russian, which makes me curious, but not about the past. I'm curious about different cultures and their rituals. In the end, this journey won't change the course of Loulou's existence. We can't help but call upon what we know intimately: I recently wrote a short text about adoption – a subject that means a lot to me personally – which was performed by Anne Azoulay. The idea of finding the mother who abandoned you, whether justified or not, is very present. A phase one must go through, but it isn't necessarily a defining one, from my point of view. One can – whether one should is another question – one can choose not to go there; our existence has already long been forged by other people – those who have raised us - and other events.

When drawing and writing dialogue, I visualize scenes as if it were a film with human actors. I don't think in animation terms because I'm engaged in reality. That doesn't mean I'm less interested in animation. For example, I love Tex Avery, but I don't care for cartoons when they become a codified genre or when it becomes a habit.

In my books as well as in my films, I need to believe in the characters and the storylines. The universe itself must be consistent even if the framework is unrealistic. Absolute imagination doesn't exist! It is inspired by the desire to rekindle specific emotions. However, you should be able to surprise yourself. It can happen from time to time that you reach a certain artistic grace when you go beyond your technical limitations. I think that happens when you purposely ignore them. For me the expression "keep at it" is terrible: you may become a good professional, but that's not enough when it is a question of creation.

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRLS

Grégoire Solotareff: Tom and Wolfy set out to find an unknown woman and are going to come into contact with a host

of characters, often female. Among them, Scarlett is clearly the linchpin of the film. Scarlett is the same age as Tom and Wolfy, or a little older. She's pretty, ambiguous and contradictory, in short, very attractive. Scarlett is the eternal feminine archetype, unlike the little girl rabbits from the first *Loulou*, who were silly sisters, and a bit ninnyish (laughter). Scarlett is the Prince's favorite and lives in a gilded cage. Tom and Wolfy suddenly represent other perspectives for her. Like young women today, Scarlett is more mature and cunning than boys her age. She's flamboyant, first of all because she's a fox and redheaded; then because she is the bridge between the adult world – Wolfenberg, this chocolate box village – and adolescence.

Through these encounters, Tom and Wolfy learn about the awaking of the senses. At the beginning of the story, there is Cornelia, the gypsy woman, who is very mysterious and has many faces. I have sketched quite a number of crows in the past: I like drawing them and I imagine – without really knowing the reason – a certain relationship with Snow White's stepmother, something both human and animal.

When Tom and Loulou wander through the streets of Wolfenberg at night, their lucky star is Rosetta, Galantine's widow. Ah, Rosetta... I met mine when I was a teenager on a trip to Austria (laughter). I ended up in a wooden inn, run by an exuberant, generous and incredible lady who was like Rosetta. Everyone has a woman in their lives like her who wants to feed you – by force if necessary – but joyfully. She is both overly-maternal and Fellinian fantasy. Through Rosetta, there are eyewink references to sexuality without it being too heavy-handed. Finally, Olympe is the archetype of the capricious woman and above all THE blood mother.

THE ESSENCE OF ADOLESCENCE

Grégoire Solotareff: I have always been very attached to childhood and its universe. Despite the passing time, my memories and feelings from that period are quite vivid. Once expressed, I think that they can at times strike a familiar chord with readers and moviegoers. In my books, the “communication strategy” consists in using this ammunition to produce an enjoyable read, curiosity and a feeling of freedom. In *Wolfy the incredible secret*, the heroes, who are now teenagers, experience an illusion of freedom through their journey – in the form of a road movie - and this unpredictable adventure. Tom and Loulou are also curious about others and “receptive,” which is a characteristic of pre-adulthood.

Wolfy and Tom have two different approaches to their teenager years. Wolfy is a big kid while Tom is more mature, reflective. Jean-Luc and I found this duality of which we are so fond: the character who is small – in size – and who purports to be more than he is in reality; the other who's grown too quickly - has long been a wolf without knowing it – in the image of someone who is eternally naive. This mix of showing off and naiveté is peculiar to boys, I believe. Moreover, they often remain in an extended period of adolescence until the age of 30, unlike girls (laughter).

Adolescence also represents the discovery of sensuality. The women evoked are the key but, more generally, Jean-Luc and I wondered how to evoke sexuality – a vast subject that is very present among us adolescent adults in arrested development – in an inexplicit way. In the past I have been criticized for making too many allusions to it my books. As an anecdote, the Americans in particular refused to publish “Le Petit Musée”[The Little Museum], which is an art book for youth published by L'ecole des loisirs, a children's book publisher, because in the details of a classical painting from the Fontainebleau school, one can see nude breasts! (Laughter) For *Wolfy the incredible secret*, we went to the very limit – but no further - of what parents tell their children. Sex exists. You can tell jokes about it, make allusions, just like in fairy tales. “Self-censorship” happened naturally, but there isn't any more of it than in any other of Jean-Luc's or my books. The preadolescent period that all boys go through is filled with curiosity and desire. Thus Scarlett represents the ideal girlfriend, sexy, a little older, someone with “experience.” Finally, there is a little bit of *The Graduate* or *Summer of 42* – two great films that I am not comparing Wolfy to - in Tom and Wolfy's coming of age journey. (laughter)

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

Grégoire Solotareff: Unlike fiction films, where the notion is a little different, the author of an animated film is present at every stage of the filmmaking process, but doesn't necessarily direct the film, because that's another skill. His responsibility however, is artistic supervision. But it is always difficult for me to deal with how long the process takes. Animation is essentially the opposite of drawing. It's another vector of expression, which has its own charm in the best case scenario.

But animation is not my profession and for *Wolfy, the incredible secret*, Eric Omond was the director. My role was to determine whether the result worked or not, from the point of view of the creator or the “parent.” Even though this

adventure has been fascinating and exciting, allowing us to reach a larger public, it's a bit frustrating for an illustrator because you're used to having immediate results. Which is the opposite of animation.

Yet after working alone drawing, working on a team has been a wonderful experience. Being in a team feeds inspiration and it is very gratifying to see so many people supporting your work and doing everything possible to bring it to life in another medium. I also admire the meticulousness and demanding nature of the people involved. What counts for me is keeping the emotion, the themes I wanted to convey, across time and the filter of other media.

I could be very difficult during some stages of the animation process, haunted by details that seemed important to me but that in the end, I was probably the only one to notice. The final result is a beautiful and well-made film. The scenery in particular. The global vision of the film needs to be seen in order to lay to rest one's worries and doubts!

HIS MASTER'S VOICES

Grégoire Solotareff: In my mind, the most beautiful stage of the animation process, or at least the newest for me, meaning the most interesting, is when it's time for the sound, mixing and recording the voices. From the writing stage I already had voices in mind, their tones and accents. When you imagine characters that have consistent characteristics, the voices have to reveal their personalities, bring them depth. The casting director and I began our search with a family of actors whose voices I liked and then we organized a blind casting. Without knowing who they were, we found the voices that conveyed Wolfy's kindness, Tom's liveliness and Rosetta's extroversion.

The recordings lasted two weeks and it was a delight from beginning to end! When Eric Omond and I met the actors, we spoke to them about the characters as if they were flesh and blood. They were highly amused by this exercise; they were very curious and often launched into impromptu improvisations. Recording the voices constituted a true moment of directing the actors for Eric and me, because their personalities influenced the film's spirit and tone.

I was never surprised by the correspondence between the actors and their character's voices. In the studio, Stéphane Debac WAS Tom; Malik Zidi was gentler and level-headed, while Anaïs Demoustier was more of an "adolescent": that probably reflects who they are in real life. Even physically at times there were common points between the actors and their characters, although I had drawn them long before choosing the actors!

A voice can also shape the way in which a character is going to be animated. Marie Berto totally influenced Rosetta - her generosity, and her colorfulness even more than the role's gargantuan dimension. (laughter) I'm also thinking of Carlo Brandt in the role of Lou-Andrea: the solemn, slow, hollow way he speaks, which set his character's sadistic stature! And then there was Marianne Basler, whose acting lent the bit of folly that was sometimes missing from Olympe. I discovered her in 1985 in Paul Vecchiali's *Rosa la Rose, fille publique* [*Rosa the rose, hooker*] she was dazzlingly, charming and thrilling. When her voice rises, Olympe is much more borderline, which also makes her unique.

ARE YOU WOLFY?

Grégoire Solotareff: Even if he has existed for over 25 years, Wolfy isn't a character that is on my mind on a daily basis. Thankfully! This said, I'm fascinated with wolves as fictional heroes: they are solitary, mysterious, a source of the craziest myths and rumors. I still draw them regularly. The idea of lugging Wolfy around with me to my dying days scares me! That's why the basic idea for the film was his evolution: he grows up, which represents an artistic challenge.

"Humanized" animals continue to be my main source of inspiration. The fables of Jean de La Fontaine and Aesop's fables were my first loves as a drawing artist. It is still a pleasure for me to draw caricatures: sketches of people don't interest me; using animals is a way to gain perspective. In reference to children, this has allowed me to work on complicated themes and delicate truths. It is my feeling that animals call upon a greater imagination. And, more than anything, they are a vector of expression that gives you great freedom!

For further information about Grégoire Solotareff <http://www.primaline.com/solotareff/index.fr.html>

Grégoire Solotareff (author, illustrator and screenwriter) – Biography

Grégoire Solotareff was born in Egypt in 1953. His father, Lebanese, was a doctor and his mother, Russian, a painter. He first practiced medicine, which he studied in Paris, then decided to dedicate himself entirely to writing and drawing, especially books for children. He illustrated and authored his first cartoon album in 1985, when his son asked him to draw illustrations for stories he told him. He has since published a hundred or so illustrated albums, notably for the French publishing house Ecole des Loisirs.

His originality lies mainly in his characters and the emotions and feelings he gives them, his freestyle, modern and rebellious tone, his very personal way of addressing children, shunning the pedantic tone generally used. He knows how to approach serious subjects (difference, friendship, solitude) distilling their heaviness by creating universal stories that are suffused with humor and avoid sentimentality and sopiness. These characteristics found in “Wolfy” are appreciated by children and parents alike. His work is often recommended by teachers, librarians and booksellers. A major author and illustrator of contemporary children’s books, Grégoire Solotareff has written 128 books in 15 years, the majority of which have been translated the world over (United States, Germany, Japan, Denmark, Italy, England, Switzerland, Australia, Spain, Finland, Korea...). Among the must-reads: Secret Life of Santa Claus, Maximillian, Don't Call Me Little Bunny, Little Museum, Noel's Christmas Secret, The Ogre and the Frog King, Three Witches, All Alone, The Mask...

He heads the “Loulou & Cie” collection for pre-K aged children at Ecole des Loisirs, his publisher since 1985.

In addition to his nomination for the Andersen Award in 2002, Grégoire Solotareff received the Montreuil Award in 1992, the Versele award in Belgium in 1992 and the Bologna Grand Prize in 1993.

Originally conceived for television, Loulou, the animated film adapted from his eponymous album, had a successful cinematic release in March 2003 reaching a large audience (590,000 box office). Screenwriter and artistic director for this 28-minute animated film short directed by Serge Elissalde, Grégoire Solotareff has also co-written the screenplays for four other Loulou short films.

Filmography

Loulou and other wolves, 75', 2003 – the film comprises:

Loulou and four other wolves, directed by Serge Elissalde, adapted from Grégoire Solotareff's eponymous children's book, co-written with Jean-Luc Fromental, traditional animation, 28'. Pulcinella award for Best Television Film 2003, and Unicef Pulcinella at the Positano Festival 2003. Best Youth Film Award at the Auch Festival in 2003.

T'es où mère-grand?!, vector animation design and direction by François Chalet 6'41

Micro loup, vector animation design and direction by Richard McGuire 7'15

Pour faire le portrait d'un loup, vector animation design and direction by Philippe Petit-Roulet, 5'16 Best Film for Children at the BAF Festival, Bradford 2003

Marie K et le loup, vector animation design and direction by Marie Caillou, 6'14

U, by Grégoire Solotareff and Serge Elissalde, 75' 2006 – with the voices of: Isild le Besco, Vahina Giocante, Arthus de Penguern, Guillaume Gallienne, Bernard Alane, Bernadette Lafont, Sanseverino, Maud Forget, Marie-Christine Orry, Jean-Claude Bolle-Reddat

Opening film at the International Animation Film Festival, June 2006. Selected for the Toronto International Film Festival (2006), Rome International Film Festival (2006), Berlin Film Festival (2007)

Eric Omond (director) - Biography

Artistic work

2009-2011: Animation supervisor for ZARAFÀ by Rémi Bezançon and Jean-Christophe Lie, released in February 2012. Prima Linea Productions/Pathé

2006-2009: Animator for THE ILLUSIONIST by Sylvain Chomet, 2011 Cesar for best animated film. Django/Pathé

1991-2008: Author and illustrator for forty-or-so comic albums (see bibliography).

1999: Playwright, MADEMOISELLE B, for the Jardins Insolites theater company

Teaching Positions

2004-2006: Final year students specialized in comic graphic design at the Pivaut School in Nantes.

2001-2003: Teaching the art of comics in prisons and through internships (Correctional facilities in Angers, Blois, and Nanterre) as well as in prevention programs in Angers.

1993: Angers School of Beaux Arts, Art section, professor.

Bibliography

Glénat publishing

- HCL : 1.Hard core lycée / 2.Amour baston - Le dérisoire (Best Illustration prize Angoulême 2003) - Féroce - L'épouvantail pointeur

Vent d'ouest publishing

- Ecarlate : 1.Fun house / 2.Amour clone

Delcourt publishing

- Toto L'ornithorynque : 1.l'Arbre magique / 2.Le maître des brumes / 3.Les prédateurs / 4.Le bruit qui rêve / 5.Les soeurs cristallines / 6.Au pays du ciel / 7.Le lion marsupial - Ninie Rezergoude : 1.Les mangeur d'âme / 2.Confessions post-mortem - Sang et encre : 1.Corsaire / 2.Pirates / 3.Libertalia - Gus le menteur - Mort Linden : 1.Les peuples jumeaux / 2.Ceux des montagnes / 3.Bestiaux - Les gamins : 1.Dans l'espace / 2.Prisonniers du passé / 3.Perdus dans l'océan - Hubert la cervelle - Stabat mater

Dargaud publishing

- La voleuse du père fauteuil : 1.L'homme mystère / 2.Les heures noires / 3.La maison de pénitence / recueil

Fluide Glacial publishing

- Paris strass

Triskel publishing

- Phil Kaos

Comédie Illustrée publishing

- Jeunes, des nouvelles de la cité

La Boîte à Bulle publishing

- Transports sentimentaux

Feu vertèbres cervicales publishing

- Pandora boîte

Jean-Luc Fromental (screenwriter) – Biography

After ten years in publishing, Jean-Luc Fromental devoted himself to the press, advertising and comics (in 1981, he created the "L'année de la Bande Dessinée" [The year in comics], the magazine "Métal Aventure" in 83, editor-in-chief at "Metal Hurlant" from 85 to 86) and television (screenwriter for the French television shows "Médecins de nuit," "Hôtel de police," and "Navarro," etc).

After a first foray into animated series in 1986 as a screenwriter for the TV series "Bleu, L'enfant de la Terre" [Blue, child of the earth], a series by Philippe Druillet, he tried his hand again in 91 with Meobius' 3D project "Starwatcher." In 1994, he wrote the series "Il était une fois," [Once upon a time] for 26 comic book artists and 65 episodes of the series "Dodo." The series 26x26 "Witch World" that he created in 1997 with the English illustrator Colin Hawkins is broadcasted throughout Europe. In 2000, he finished a 26x26 series with the painter Hervé Di Rosa called "Les Renés" In 2001, he participated in the creation of the TV series "Lucky Luke," as writing director and screenwriter.

In 2002, he co-wrote "Loulou and four little wolves," with Grégoire Solotareff for cinema.

In 2003, he wrote a screenplay for the feature length animated film "Mojo Blues" for Normaal films. In 2006, he finished the screenplay "Pourquoi j'ai (pas) mangé mon père » [How I ate my father], adapted from the book by Roy Lewis, for Pathé films. For Les Armateurs, he wrote « Ponpon » a TV special in stop-motion animation. In 2007, he undertook the writing of the series 78x7' "Mandarine and the Cow" (Normaal/FR 3 television) whose 2nd season ended in 2011. In 2010, with Grégoire Solotareff he wrote the feature film "Wolfy, the incredible secret," released in 2013. He has also created the label Denoël Graphic within the Denoël publishing house, dedicated to publishing comic albums for an adult audience (including: "A soviet youth" by Nikolai Maslove, "Tamara Drewe" by Posy Simmonds, " Genesis, by Robert Crumb), which recently celebrated its ten years of existence.

Writing for some of the biggest names in graphic novels ((Floc'h, Chaland, Loustal, Jano, Stanislas) Jean-Luc Fromental is equally the author of 30-or-so books, novels, traveling essays, fairy-tales and comic books.

Publishing

1972-79: translator, reader, ghost writer, collection director, creator of the foreign language department at JC Lattès

1979-81 – literary director at Alta-Messinger publishing

1981-83 creation of "L'Année de la Bande Dessinée" [The Year in Comics] Temps Futurs publishing

1981-86: collection director at Humanoïdes Associes.

1995: literary director for 10 Retours vers le Futur, 1001 Nuits publishing

1997: literary direction for 10 Textes Stupefiants, 1001 Nuits publishing.

Since 2003: creation and direction of the Denoël Graphic collection at Denoël publishing.

PRESS

Contributor to a variety of magazines, newspapers and journals - Pilote, Le Magazine Littéraire, Documents France-Soir, Le Matin, Libération, L'Echo des Savanes, Les Cahiers de la BD, etc.

A film by Grégoire Solotareff

Directed by Éric Omond

Produced by Valérie Schermann and Christophe Jankovic

Coproduced by Léon Perahia

Production manager: Tanguy Olivier

Graphic design: Grégoire Solotareff

Screenplay and dialogue: Grégoire Solotareff and Jean-Luc Fromental

Original music: Laurent Perez Del Mar

Editing: Céline Kélépikis

With the voices of: Malik Zidi (Loulou), Stéphane Debac (Tom), Anaïs Demoustier (Scarlett), Carlo Brandt (Lou-Andrea), Marianne Basler (Olympe), Léonore Chaix (Cornelia), Sarah-Jane Sauvegrain (Nina/Captain N), Patrick Paroux (Momo, le portier), Marie Berto (Rosetta), Rémi Roubakha (Simon-Edgar Finkel), John Arnold (Paul-Loup).

Scenery and characters: Grégoire Solotareff

Storyboard: Eric Omond

Scenery design and development: Grégoire Solotareff and Julien De Man

Key animator: Laurent Kircher

Supervisor animation assistance teams Marie Bouchet

Layout team supervisor: Éric Briche

Scenery team supervisors: Julien de Man and Éric Marceteau

Compositing team supervisors: Arnaud Bois and Jean-Pierre Bouchet

Studios: Prima Linea Productions Paris and Angoulême with collaborations from Dreamwall, Kecskemétfilm, Pure Arts and Digital Graphics

Sound design, effects and mixing: Piste Rouge - Bruno Sez nec, Sébastien Marquilly, Fabien Devillers

Produced by Prima Linea Productions, in coproduction with Belvision, France 3 Cinéma and RTBF (Radio Télévision Belge Francophone)

With participation from CNC (National center for cinematography and moving images), de Canal+, Ciné+ and France Television

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