

LES FILMS SUR MESURE present

*benjamin*  
**LAVERNHE**

*Member of the Comédie-Française*

*sara*                      *kyan*                      *julia*                      *françois*                      *guilaine*  
**GIRAUDEAU**   **KHOJANDI**   **PIATON**   **MOREL**   **LONDEZ**



FESTIVAL DE CANNES  
OFFICIAL SELECTION  
2020

# THE SPEECH

*Written and directed by Laurent* **TIRARD**





LES FILMS SUR MESURE present

*benjamin*

**LAVERNHE**

*Member of the Comédie-Française*

*sara*

*kyan*

*julia*

*françois*

*guilaine*

**GIRAUDEAU KHOJANDI PIATON MOREL LONDEZ**



FESTIVAL DE CANNES  
OFFICIAL SELECTION  
2020

# THE SPEECH

*Written and directed by laurent* **TIRARD**

88 min – France – 2020 – Scope – 5.1

Translated into English by Delia Pringle Garnier [delia@zefishandchips.com](mailto:delia@zefishandchips.com)



## *SYNOPSIS*

Adrien is stuck. Stuck at a family dinner where his father is telling the same old story he always tells, his mother is serving up the same leg of lamb she always cooks, and his sister, Sophie, is hanging on every word uttered by her future husband as if he were Einstein, or something. So, Adrien waits. Waits for Sonia to answer his text and end the month-long «break» she wanted. But he gets no reply. And to top it all, Ludo, his future brother-in-law, asks him if he'll make a speech at their wedding. Jeez, he didn't see that coming! Adrien's anguish turns to panic. But what if this speech turns out to be the making of him?



# LAURENT TIRARD - FABCARO

## JOINT INTERVIEW

*An interview with Laurent Tirard, director, and FabCaro, author of the novel *Le Discours* (The Speech) published by Gallimard*

---

### *Did you two know each other before this film?*

**L.T :** Two or three years ago, I read *Zaï Zaï Zaï Zaï*, which I loved and, thanks to the magic of social networking, I was able to contact Fab directly and tell him that I was a big fan! I knew that he lived near Montpellier, so one day, when I was in the area, I invited him out for coffee. The rights to *Zaï Zaï Zaï Zaï* had already been snatched up, and in any case, I don't think I would have known how to adapt it. But I told myself that one day or another, we would work together. And that day came just six months later. It wasn't even Fab who told me that he was publishing a novel! I dived head first into *Le Discours* and immediately felt right about its tone; I knew that a film was possible. So, I called Fab and told him that I wanted to adapt his novel.

**F.C :** And I told him that it wasn't adaptable! Such introspective prose would be boring on screen. Everything happens inside Adrien's head and, on top of that, it all revolves around one meal.

**L.T :** He said: «Come on, it doesn't speak to anyone about anything!» Whereas, in reality, it's quite the opposite: *Le Discours* talks about everything.

### *What excited you about this project?*

**L.T :** For some time I'd been looking to make a second 'first' film: a film where I could reset the counter to zero, where I could try things out, take risks, within a reasonable production budget, very different from a blockbuster like *Asterix and Obelix: God Save Britannia*. Besides, the big distributors that I'd worked with before were puzzled by the screenplay of *The Speech*.

**F.B :** You never told me that! Probably, so as not to make me freak out!

**L.T :** Even I didn't expect it to be quite so hard. Yet, it's not that different from my first film, *The Story of My Life* (Original title: *Mensonges et trahisons et plus si affinités*) that everyone praised for being so original and encouraged me to make another similar film. In the end, everything happened very quickly with Jean Labadie from Le Pacte. He loved the screenplay and was very keen to endorse the project.

## *How did you work on the adaptation?*

**L.T :** The book isn't written in a linear way: the narration is chaotic, a stream of consciousness, as it's straight out of Adrien's head. I wanted the film to be the same. So, I had to construct a narrative that was just as loose and unstructured, yet which was cinematic. I started off by methodically dissecting the novel and then summarizing all the key passages on note cards. Then I mixed up the cards, so I'd start, for example, with an anecdote from the middle of the book and then make myself take out certain passages even though I liked them. It usually takes me about six to eight months to write a script, but this time round, once I had put my 'puzzle' of note cards on the wall, it came easily and only took me a couple of months to write.

**F.C :** We spoke on a regular basis about the adaptation, even though we agreed from the start that I would have to let go of my 'baby'. Not only did I have total confidence in Laurent, but I also liked the idea of not revisiting a piece of my work and of relying on someone else's creative vision. I have to admit that at first it felt quite alien, but then, once I read the script, I could see and understand the links that he'd made between scenes. I was impressed. For example, he was able to make some of my references in the novel much more accessible to a wider audience. In the book, at a fancy-dress party, Sonia, Adrien's fiancée, claims to be dressed as a singer in a band that no one had ever heard of except me. In Laurent's script, she's dressed as the famous French singer Barbara and it works better. I recognized my voice in the script but I loved his changes and his staging ideas like the Connect 4 counter rolling away to represent the disappearance of childhood. In fact, there's one staging idea that I was really jealous of when I first read the film script: the United Nations translators, each in their own glass jar, who interpret the family's exchanges during the dinner.

**L.T :** But that's in the novel! A tiny aside by Adrien that I immediately picked up on: the parents' dining room with interpreters' booths on either side. It was such a fun exercise taking a small idea that seems innocuous and amplifying it, taking it to the very limit.

**F.C :** On paper, I like to push things, but Laurent knows how to pull this off visually. When I saw certain scenes on screen, it really felt like they'd popped straight out of my head.

**L.T :** When I made a film about Molière, I read all of Molière's work to fully immerse myself. When I adapted *Le Petit Nicolas*, I buried myself away for months in the books so that the world of Sempé-Goscinny became second nature. I did the same with Fab: I read all of his work to infuse myself with his spirit, and with his writing, which is ultimately very cinematic.





## *Are some of the characters more developed in the film than in the novel?*

**F.C :** When I read the script, I found my characters to be more concrete: it must be said that the actors had already been chosen, so I could put a face to each character. But it's true that Sophie, for example, is much blander in my novel! She's not very engaging. She's just the protagonist's sister. Laurent has given her an extra dimension, as of course has Julia Piaton in the way she's played her. When I saw the film and watched the scene where Sophie feels humiliated, I actually had tears in my eyes.

**L.T :** That's a constant in my films: I want people to like all the characters, whether they're main characters or secondary ones. Each time I read the novel, I noticed new, subtle little phrases - like, when Adrien talks about his childhood with his sister - I was sure that was something that would speak to the audience and make the characters more endearing. I just teased out these little threads of tenderness, the 'kernel' of these ideas that were already there in the book.

**F.C :** In the novel, it's true that Adrien's love for his family is not directly expressed. Actually, Laurent is more explicit than I am.

## *How did you go about choosing the actors?*

**L.T :** First of all, I had to find the right person to play Adrien. This was quite tricky because some people who read the book, particularly the women readers, found him a bit irritating. A self-centred 'kidult' who deserves a kick up the backside!

**F.C :** People have said that to me too!

**L.T :** So, I had to pay special attention to that when writing the script but, more importantly, I had to find an actor to who could play 'annoying' Adrien but who also had an enormous potential for empathy. What's more, the role required a commanding performance: in almost every shot, Adrien switches from monologues direct to camera, to dialogues, to voice-overs. So, I needed an actor in his thirties capable of great versatility! I loved Benjamin Lavernhe's performance in Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano's film *C'est La Vie!* (Original title: *Le Sens de la Fête*). I went to see him perform at the Comédie-Française, and I also saw him in *Un Entretien*, a TV series on Canal +. It quickly became obvious that he was the man for the job. So obvious in fact that I couldn't imagine the film without him. So I did something that you're never supposed to do: I went to see him with an unfinished script. If he liked the feel of the film, I was prepared to book him out for the filming dates there and then!



*And so he accepted this amazing part...*

**L.T :** And this crazy and complex challenge. Together, we gave a lot of thought to the idea of creating a sense of distance from the audience in all the pieces he acted to camera. We had to find the right distance to create a strong connection with the viewer. We did a lot of read-throughs, to find the right tone, as we did with the other actors too.

*While we're on the subject of the other actors...*

**L.T :** They all answered yes within 24 hours! François Morel, Adrien's father, was another obvious choice. Guilaine Londez is little known to the general public, but people immediately recognise her face. For me, she personifies the ideal mother - a bit irritating but brimming with warmth and humanity. I don't know who I would've chosen if she'd said no. Added to this 'family' were Julia Piaton and Kyan Khojandi, who come from other aspects of the cinema and comedy world, and we had the perfect dynamic. And then there is Sara Giraudeau, with her idiosyncratic charm and her extraordinary voice. During the first read-through, her approach to the character took me by surprise: during the scene where Sonia announces to Adrien that she wants a break from their relationship, I had imagined that she would be quite cutting and strong. But instead she played it with a quiet, almost plaintive voice: it was so unexpected and great! I'd wanted to work with her for a long time.

## *How did you go about directing the actors?*

**L.T :** : I had a very clear idea in my head about the tone I wanted to strike, but I also know from experience that you always have great, unimagined results when you're open and let the actors make their own suggestions. That's how life is breathed into a film. So, I always begin by letting the actors say what they had in mind, which I keep or not, or reframe slightly. It's a shame to be too prescriptive when you want a film to have an emotional affect on the audience. The hardest part, of course, was all the sequences that took place at the table, and above all, those times when they were all in mid-conversation and, suddenly, Benjamin turns to speak to the camera. I didn't want to have to re-dub the voices in post-production because that always sounds a bit fake. So, we did some tests with boom mics placed around the table to see to whether the other four actors could continue their conversation by lowering their voices while Benjamin was talking to camera. And it's crazy how quickly they caught on! The other actors were able to slightly lower their voices, when required, intuitively. The first one to get the hang of it was Guilaine: she lowered her voice and raised it again with incredible ease. The sound engineer had hardly needed to correct or change any sound levels: the actors did all the work. There was almost no post-production.

**F.C :** It's crazy that it worked, in one live take!





*So no special effects were used, even when the characters 'freeze'?*

**L.T :** No freeze framing was used at all. In any case, freeze framing is awful, and it had to feel like they were living, breathing human beings. Once again, the actors did this for real. We shot a whole day and they did the take eighteen times! Hats off to them. I myself wasn't sure it was possible. Though I must admit that digital technology has its advantages: I just had to erase a few small blinks of the eye.

**F.C :** For my part, I went to the set on the day Benjamin was supposed to give the great wedding speech where he shows off and juggles. He had to redo the scene about fifteen times and each time it was perfect, with just small variations in his performance. A true virtuoso. So that's what being an actor really is.



*What did you do to make sure that the film wasn't static?*

**L.T :** I thought about it every waking hour! As soon I began writing I was thinking how to make it animated. And then, during filming, it was a collaborative process which we worked on step by step through discussions with the actors who put forward their ideas. Kyan always had ideas to share with me. As did the cinematographer, who came up with the idea of the toilet wall that collapses and opens out onto the astrologer's office.

**F.C :** Ah yes, I really liked that staging idea. The advantage of comic books is that you can draw whatever you like with a pen. Laurent gave himself the same creative freedom but in film.

**L.T :** It's a collective piece of work. Everyone was so excited by the script that it inspired them to come up with lots of ideas. My job consisted of agreeing to some ideas and turning down others, while staying on track. But mainly, my job was to strive to be original, with three main film influences in mind: *Annie*



*Hall* with its incredible narrative freedom, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* for its visual inventiveness and poetry, and *Family Resemblances* (original title: *Un Air de Famille*) a cult film about family relationships. Special effects don't really interest me, I prefer someone like Gondry's take on them, who creates home-made special effects with real everyday objects. The collapsing toilet wall is what cinema's all about for me! We shot that scene with several cameras, at different angles, so that we could then choose the most visually effective sequence, the one that was least dull for the viewer. And then, even though the action takes place mostly at the dinner table, *The Speech* still has about thirty sets to illustrate Adrien's flashbacks and his vivid imagination.

### *Finally, The Speech is a film about what?*

**F.C :** In my novel, I wanted to talk first and foremost about heartbreak. As for Adrien's relationship with his family, I took quite a bit from my own family relationships. My mother recognized so much of herself in the book that I had to keep telling her that the character was fictional! She doesn't have a towel rail in the shape of a fir tree penis in her kitchen but someone else I know does. My sister didn't give me encyclopaedias, but my mother used to buy me Lucky Luke comics when I was a kid and continued to do so every year until I was thirty. In fact, I felt like I had included some very intimate details and then it turns out that they are universal: we all have the same extraordinary relationship with our family. The same reserve too that leads us to exchange banalities instead of simply saying that we love each other. I didn't expect to be so moved by Laurent's film. It's a gamble, a really whacky comedy, but one that I think will touch many people, far beyond the realm of my readers. I really did well to let go of my baby!

**L.T :** *The Speech* is a film about... me! (*laughs*). Ask my relatives how I behave at family meals: I'm in my own world, distracted and my head is full of other stuff. I'm glad to have dealt with the theme of heartbreak which, in cinema, is rarely looked at from the man's point of view. Us men can put get ourselves into a right old state when waiting for a text from a woman we're in love with. And then, of course, there's the family with all the faux-pas and everything that goes unsaid. *The Speech* talks about our relationship with others. Which means it's about life, isn't it?







# INTERVIEW WITH BENJAMIN LAVERNHE

## *Were you familiar with the work of FabCaro?*

Not that familiar. I'd read his best-seller, *Zaï Zaï Zaï Zaï*, which is totally whacky, offbeat humour, and a new form of the absurd. At first, I only read a bit of Laurent's screenplay - he got in touch before he'd even finished writing it. He had seen me in *Love At Second Sight* (original title: *Mon Inconnue*) and in *C'est La Vie!* (original title: *Le Sens de la Fête*) and apparently really wanted to work with me. I was very flattered! It was when I read the second part of the script that I knew I wanted to play the part: the mix of poetry, humour, and... I was really touched by my character's "sick brain". But also, the deep sense of melancholy that overwhelmed me once I'd finished reading the script. In fact, that was the true deciding factor: the emotion of the last few pages of the book that also comes through in the film! It was a real challenge for Laurent to direct this film and a real challenge for me to play this character, with the pieces direct to camera etc. Such an original style of narration encouraged me to take control of the story like never before.

## *There were a lot of different emotions to convey...*

Including tenderness, irony, despair, anger, suffering, immense joy, and resignation. And the list goes on. Like a sort of «all-inclusive role» that allows you to play a condensed, speeded-up version of the whole gamut of human emotion. And then, there was also the mix of realism, which was in contrast to the more absurd and burlesque scenes, all this written in the language of FabCaro and so well rendered by Laurent. I read the novel a few weeks after I'd read the script, and I couldn't help making a list of details and anecdotes that I particularly liked in the book to show Laurent before the script was a done deal. I needed to say that I thought that certain omissions, which were most certainly voluntary on his part, were heart-breaking for me! He took my comments on board and, more often than not, agreed but he had a film to make and that required making certain difficult choices. It's no small feat to adapt a novel, especially one like this. You have to make sacrifices to help drive the storytelling. But, for example, the wishing tree scene and the moment when he writes «I'd like Solene to allow herself be fucked up the arse» (sic) that made me scream with laughter, and I didn't have to negotiate on that one because Laurent had already kept it in! His narrative had to hold the viewer's attention for an hour and a half without being boring, that was our challenge!



### *How did you find the right distance for the «pieces to camera»?*

Right from the outset, we worked on different ways to speak to the camera. Laurent was very careful about striking the right tone. He wanted me not to force it, even if the camera was far away, not to try to reach it. Then he wanted me to know how exactly how to leave the camera in a split-second to return to the reality of the dinner. To be totally natural, fluid, and make it a non-event... The camera was an ally to be assimilated. Sometimes I wanted to say to the camera: «Fuck off, I want to act with my fellow actors»! It was a strange feeling. What's more, talking to the camera heightens your sense of stage fright because it makes you acutely aware of what you're doing, like standing in front of a mirror. You think about it, you keep thinking about it, and you mess up, like a pianist who should never think too hard about his fingers on the keys, but just let them play, because if he thinks about it too much it's a disaster. Every subtle variation in my mood counted: if I was too melancholic, too recitative, or too theatrical, Laurent would help me: «More everyday, less formal, no making comments with your eyebrows! ». As for the voice overs to come, and all the silent scenes that had to be shot, I had to be aware of my facial expressions, and bring them in line with what my character Adrien was thinking. For example, I had to be careful not to have a neutral expression or a big smile on my face, when Adrien was supposed to be thinking about something horrendous.

### *How long did it take to shoot the actual dinner?*

We spent fifteen days at the table eating lamb and chocolate pear tart! Fifteen days to get to grips with the particular style of play, the gymnastics of it. Luckily, we genuinely loved each other in our little «family». They really supported me, understood my need for total focus and concentration, even though they needed to crack jokes to release tension, especially between the takes where they had to remain motionless and freeze. They were so generous during the counter-shots, which often required great patience on their behalf. They were a great help to me. Wonderful fellow actors. Julia, Guilaine, François, Kyan: each one was so good in their role, always there to serve the situation, never trying to hog the limelight. That's impressive! We might not all come from the same professional backgrounds but the admiration was mutual. In the scenes away from the dinner, Sara was perfect in the part of Sonia: her charm, her uniqueness explain why Adrien is so crazy about her. It was important for the viewer to empathize with Adrien, to understand how hard it was for him not to have any news from her. And to will them to get back together.

*There are also the sequences of the speeches, which are closer in feeling to an on-stage monologue and have a completely different energy.*

The work schedule helped. After the fortnight of shooting scenes at the table, we had four days to shoot the speeches. It was at that point that freedom to play with the script became especially important. Plus, I was speaking to an audience of people in the wedding venue, so it was real, and that helps! It was like being on a stage in front of an audience and so I was able to let rip, unlike the scenes at the table which were very «contrived». Laurent put me to good use by letting me improvise – both during the disastrous and the successful speech. I thought up the idea of the pirouette, the crappy magic tricks, the scratch cards, the sweets for the kids... I threw everything at it that I had, like the juggling for example, it had to come in handy one day!

*So, who is Adrien?*

His anguish touches me. The exhausting thoughts that never go quiet, the never-ending neurosis that creates situations and comedy. *Armageddon* is the story of a guy who saves the earth. This is the story of a guy waiting for just a simple text message. And all the ingredients are there for some tragi-comic scenes, whether it be the obsessive analysis of the text message he received, or the meticulous planning of a future text message he is thinking about sending. As you will have understood, as an extra appendage, I also had a phone. Especially at the table and in the toilet! Also, there is his inability to say «no» even though he'd rather die than make that speech. Added to this is his relationship with his family, and in particular, the fantasy of being able to tell them everything straight out, whereas in reality, it's all about self-censorship and holding back. If you were to see inside anyone's brain during a family meal, you'd soon discover strange, random thoughts and all sorts of horrors. With FabCaro, the most mundane situations are captured and recorded with such accuracy that you can't stop thinking: «Yes, that's so right! ». To sum up, it's true that Adrien is annoying: he's neurotic, he's a hypochondriac, and he's always complaining. You can understand exactly why Sonia wanted a break! But I think Laurent has made him more endearing than the character in the novel. He embodies the loss of childhood. In fact, he is above all a nostalgic, a dreamer and a true romantic.

*Did you like what you saw when you first saw yourself in this film?*

When you first watch a film you're in, all the memories of filming it come flooding back, and you don't watch the film like an ordinary spectator. And then seeing my head close-up: God, I look like my father! But when I watched it again with an audience, I now feel proud that the film works so well, and that people seem to like Adrien so much, despite all his flaws. This film is a piece of cinematic poetry, it's both a very original arthouse comedy and a film for the general public.

## *GUILAINE LONDEZ*

«I knew FabCaro's comic books but I must admit that I've always found his view of the world quite cruel. Saying that, I loved this novel and both its melancholy and sensitivity. The script that Laurent Tirard wrote really impressed me: not only did he capture the spirit of the novel, but he also left room for the creative staging of the book, something between a formal structure and great freedom. Also, Laurent's directions to the actors were delivered with strict precision but also absolute belief in what we could achieve. It was so well written: all we had to do was allow ourselves to get completely involved in the reality of each situation. What's more, I've rarely had such a close bond with the other actors on any shoot: everyone stuck to his/her own role, with his/her own character type, paying close attention to the others. Acting out the scenes was amazingly fluid, guided by Laurent and his gentle requests. We had to stay very focused and concentrate but Laurent also allowed us time to joke around and have a laugh. This meant we could relax a little and let off steam between scenes where we had to remain totally still during Benjamin's monologues. Benjamin is incredible: he was the captain of the ship! He set the pace and all we had to do was follow. I'm so proud to have played his mother. Her character really touched me: this woman is so sensitive yet she's incapable of expressing it. She reminds me of my own mother: one of those women from an older generation, who is very modest, and who exists in a state of denial without questioning the status quo in order to just keep going. I chose to play her as someone uncomplicated and discreet, but also someone full of love. This pent-up emotion that cannot put into words suddenly gushes out when her husband is telling his story and she just laughs uncontrollably. Laurent allowed me to continue with this fit of the giggles to the point where it makes my character feel uncomfortable. During filming, I was also in a play at the theatre in the evening. I had to get up at 5 o'clock every morning to be on set, but I did it with great enthusiasm because I was always in a rush to see my film «family». We've all experienced that kind of family dinner ripe with things that are left unsaid, and woven with all those small little nuances of feeling that parents and their children are subjected to. When I was young, for example, I gave my mother a necklace I had made which was way too small to go over her head. She never wore it but she kept it all those years, hanging on the corner of a mirror... »







## *FRANÇOIS MOREL*

«I love *Zaï Zaï Zaï Zaï*, and all of FabCaro's other comic books. I read *Le Discours* as soon as it came out and I thought it was totally impossible to adapt to film! Yet, Laurent managed to remain faithful to the book and make a great film. He's succeeded in making both a popular comedy on subjects such as family, love and relationships that concern us all, and an extremely innovative art-house film. It's great when he uses the series of translators to illustrate the communication problems at dinner, as though we're at a conference meeting in the UN! My character, Adrien's father, always tells the same old anecdotes because perhaps he thinks that he doesn't have much to say to his family. I know a lot of men like that! But he's a nice guy, who holds his wife and children dear, and for him, this dinner is convivial: he's just enjoying spending an evening with the people he loves. As for his long-winded anecdote about the hitchhiker, Laurent let me write it myself the day before filming. It's riddled with all of my absurd digressions! Before we began filming, I was a bit worried: the thought of spending two weeks sitting at a dinner table with other actors could have been hell. But I soon realized that I was surrounded by acting partners who were both talented and friendly! You don't see us moving at all during the «freeze frame» moments, do you? We're really good at it, aren't we? »



# JULIA PIATON

«FabCaro’s humour is on point! It’s cutting, but we all recognise our own behaviour in it! I read the novel before reading the script. The novel was very touching, and Laurent managed to keep that sense of melancholy in the script. This comedy is full of pathos when it comes to human relationships, but fortunately it ends well. Why is communication between people so incredibly difficult! Reading the novel, you can feel Adrien’s loneliness: you really hope that he’ll get back together with Sonia. And then there’s his parents, which, when played by François Morel and Guilaine Londez, really come to life with such authenticity, and a little hint of sadness. Sophie, my character, and in particular the tightly-knit couple she forms with her fiancé, have a bigger role to play in Laurent’s script than in the novel. And there is more interaction between Adrien and his brother-in-law. The double-act with Kyan was both interesting and fun to work on. Like creating a two-headed monster! Two losers at the table. They’re both so uptight. They can’t speak their minds. At first, neither of them come across as very nice people, but underlying the vitriol of FabCaro’s characterization, there is a lot of tenderness. On paper, Sophie is quite unlikeable but, as is often the case, she is, in fact, just an unhappy person. She is very uptight, as shown in the scene of ‘badly rolled out pastry’: she’s a control freak who dreams of having real, meaningful relationships with the people she loves. She searches for her self-esteem in the detail, and pines for recognition while trying her utmost to be a nice, well-behaved person. But the less she says, the more her emotions build up inside her. I played her like a lion in a cage. In this family, they all speak at cross purposes: «Great, you made a tart!» translates as «I’m really happy to see you! ». These sorts of banal remarks are really coded messages because they don’t know how else to communicate with one another. We all do this in real life, especially in family situations. Around Benjamin, we all just reacted to what he was saying, without disturbing the speeches he made directly to camera. We were four + one. As in a musical score, we each had to play our own notes, but also pay very close attention to the others, and be constantly on the lookout. It was complicated! There were different voice levels to respect, unbelievably subtle nuances, but we were always on the same set. It was a bit like *Groundhog Day*: you come and sit at the table and then you start on the lamb that you’d already eaten the day before at eight o’clock in the morning! The challenge was fascinating: finding the same energy with the same elements every day. And that’s not counting the amazingly close bond that was grown between us all, day after day. We were filming in very physically close quarters, and this intimacy, day in day out, was very powerful.”

## KYAN KHOJANDI

«I'd read all of FabCaro's books and, as far as I was concerned, his work was unadaptable! But when I read Laurent's very moving film script of the novel, I realized straight away that he'd gone back to his first love, *The Story of My Life* (Original title: *Mensonges et trahisons et plus si affinés...*). It also reminded me of my series on Canal +, *BREF*, so I didn't feel too out of my depth. I love original projects: for me, cinema is exciting when it tries things that have never been done before. Laurent manages to film even a simple pear and chocolate tart and make it interesting! But I must admit, I can no longer look at a pear and chocolate tart in a pastry shop window without feeling sick! I feel very honoured to have worked with this group of actors, they're all so funny, so good-natured, and so talented. François Morel is one of my heroes: I grew up with the humour of the Deschiens. One of Laurent's best decisions was to have chosen this cast. We left Benjamin in his bubble, but were always there to support him. I suggested a few ideas, like the one, during the wedding, after the speech, where Benjamin jumps on me to kiss me. What a move! There's a bit of me in Ludo: «I know stuff and I'm going to share it with you». I even come out with boring scientific facts when discussing things that are close to my heart, like sport. I know it's annoying and I try to stop myself from doing it at parties, but in this film I was finally able to express this side of my personality! Laurent let me improvise: "go on, babble on for ten minutes!" And I had to keep talking while Benjamin was speaking direct to camera. The sound was mixed live. I'd have to raise and lower my voice. It was such a great challenge. You must never judge the character you're playing nor hold them in contempt: to play them well, you have to love them. Sophie and Ludo are very in love, even if it's all a bit tame, and a bit cringey. It's simple pleasures. I, for one, love doing the conga! I started a conga one evening at the Cannes Film Festival and people were thrilled! »





## *SARA GIRAUDEAU*

«Not being written into the dinner sequences, I was deprived of the lamb! But my character appears in many different situations, different places and with different emotions, so filming was very... disjointed. But really good fun! Sonia had to be attractive enough and charming enough so that she the people could really gauge how much she means to Adrien, even though she's not seen that often. It is the basis for all of Adrien's soul-searching about Sonia and their relationship and him constantly waiting for a text message from her. So, if the viewer didn't have enough vested interest in Sonia, the film wouldn't hold up. The viewer had to become attached to her as much as Adrien was, which wasn't easy as there are more sequences where things go badly between Sonia and Adrien than scenes when they're in love. Benjamin Lavernhe and I kept asking Laurent Tirard: please, write us two or three more scenes where they're happy together! But when I first saw the final film, I realised that Laurent had called it perfectly: even during the bad moments, you can tell that they're in love. Sonia is a modern romantic: sweet but independent, and her life doesn't just fall apart when she splits up with Adrien. Sometimes, in films, couples aren't credible. But I think our portrayal is because with men and Benjamin, it worked straight away, it felt very natural to act. It was idyllic, really! I laughed so much during certain takes: luckily, the camera was on Benjamin so I had time to pull myself together before the camera turned to me. The Speech has the unique poetic feel of a first film with the edge of a great popular comedy. »

# LAURENT TIRARD, *DIRECTOR*

Laurent Tirard studied cinema at New York University, was a script reader for Warner Bros in Los Angeles, and then a journalist at Studio Magazine. He then worked as a screenwriter for television and then for cinema before going on to direct. Since 2004, he has written and directed over a dozen films.

## *FILMOGRAPHY*

### *WRITER*

- 2006** I DO: HOW TO GET MARRIED AND STAY SINGLE
- 2004** LE PLUS BEAU JOUR DE MA VIE

### *DIRECTOR*

- 2020** THE SPEECH (writer and director)
- 2018** RETURN OF THE HERO (writer and director)
- 2016** UP FOR LOVE (writer and director)
- 2014** NICHOLAS ON HOLIDAY (writer and director)
- 2012** ASTÉRIX ET OBÉLIX : GOD SAVE BRITANNIA (writer and director)
- 2009** LITTLE NICHOLAS (writer and director)
- 2007** MOLIÈRE (writer and director)
- 2004** THE STORY OF MY LIFE (writer and director)

### *TV SERIES*

- 2017** CALL MY AGENT! (Season 2 : Episodes 1 and 2 )





# BENJAMIN LAVERNHE

*Member of the Comédie-Française*

## *FILMOGRAPHY*

- 2021** DÉLICIEUX - Eric BESNARD  
LES CHOSES HUMAINES - Yvan ATTAL
- 2020** THE SPEECH - Laurent TIRARD  
MY DONKEY, MY LOVER & I - Caroline VIGNAL  
THE FRENCH DISPATCH - Wes ANDERSON
- 2018** I WISH SOMEONE WERE WAITING FOR ME SOMEWHERE -  
Arnaud VIARD  
LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT - Hugo GÉLIN
- 2017** CURIOSA - Lou JEUNET
- 2016** C'EST LA VIE! - Eric TOLENADO et Olivier NAKACHE
- 2015** THE ODYSSEY - Jérôme SALLE  
LOVE IS DEAD - Eric CAPITAINE
- 2014** THE SENSE OF WONDER - Eric BESNARD  
THE SWEET ESCAPE - Bruno PODALYDÈS
- 2013** NUMBER ONE FAN - Jeanne HERRY  
SK1 - Frédéric TELLIER  
NICE AND EASY - Benjamin GUEDJ  
THE MARCHERS - Nabil BEN YADIR
- 2012** GOING AWAY - Nicole GARCIA
- 2011** RADIOSTARS - Romain LÉVY

# SARA GIRAUDEAU

## *FILMOGRAPHY*

- 2020** THE SPEECH - Laurent TIRARD  
THE TRANSLATORS - Régis ROINSARD
- 2019** SPELLBOUND - Pascal BONITZER
- 2016** BLOODY MILK - Hubert CHARUEL  
*César Award for Best Supporting Actress*  
DIVORCE FRENCH STYLE - Martin BOURBOULON
- 2015** ET MON CŒUR TRANSPARENT - David  
& Raphaël VITAL-DURAND  
ROSALIE BLUM - Julien RAPPENEAU  
VENDEUR - Sylvain DESCLOUS  
LES BÊTISES - Rose et Alice PHILIPPON
- 2014** BEAUTY AND THE BEAST - Christophe GANS
- 2013** DENIS - Lionel BAILLU
- 2010** IMOGENE McCARTHERY - Franck MANIER et Alexandre CHARLOT

### *TV SERIES*

- 2015-2020** THE BUREAU (Season 1-5, Canal+)

# KYAN KHOJANDI

## *FILMOGRAPHY*

- 2021** LES MÉCHANTS - Mouloud ACHOUR  
**2020** THE SPEECH - Laurent TIRARD  
BYE BYE MORONS - Albert DUPONTEL  
**2018** SWEETHEART - Lisa AZUELOS  
**2016** SEE YOU UP THERE - Albert DUPONTEL  
**2015** THE COMIC ADVENTURES OF MAX AND LEON - Jonathan BARRÉ  
ROSALIE BLUM - Julien RAPPENEAU  
**2014** ALL THREE OF US - KHEIRON  
OUR FUTURES - Rémi BEZANCON  
LOU! - Julien NEEL  
**2013** CHINESE PUZZLE - Cédric KLAPISCH

# JULIA PIATON

## *FILMOGRAPHY*

- 2020** THE SPEECH – Laurent TIRARD  
THE THINGS WE SAY, THE THINGS WE DO - Emmanuel  
MOURET  
GARDER TON NOM - Vincent DUQUESNE  
C'EST LA VIE - Julien RAMBALDI
- 2018** SELFIE - Marc FITOUSSI, Tristan AUROUET, Cyril GELBLAT,  
Thomas BIDEGAIN et Vianney LEBASQUE  
SERIAL (BAD) WEDDINGS 2 - Philippe DE CHAUVERON  
WEDDING UNPLANNED - Reem KHERICI
- 2017** FAMILY BUSINESS - Anne LE NY  
TO EACH, HER OWN - Myriam AZIZA  
ROOMMATES WANTED - François DESAGNAT
- 2016** ONE MAN AND HIS COW - Mohamed HAMIDI
- 2015** LE TALENT DE MES AMIS - Alex LUTZ  
QUI C'EST LES PLUS FORTS ? - Charlotte de TURCKHEIM
- 2014** SERIAL (BAD) WEDDINGS - Philippe de CHAUVERON  
HOUSE OF TIME - Jonathan HELPERT  
STOP ME HERE - Gilles BANNIER
- 2012** THE SCAPEGOAT - Nicolas BARY  
LOGEMENT PARTAGÉ - François DESAGNAT
- 2011** FRENCH DOLLS - Katia LEWKOWICZ  
BIG IS BEAUTIFUL - Charlotte DE TURCKHEIM
- 2008** SCHOOL'S OUT - Frédéric BERTHE
- 2006** LES ARISTOS - Charlotte DE TURCKHEIM

# FRANÇOIS MOREL

## *SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY*

- 2020** THE SPEECH - Laurent TIRARD  
JOSEP - AUREL  
KAAMELOTT - Alexandre ASTIER
- 2018** FOR THE ONES WE LOVED - Pascal THOMAS
- 2015** FOOTNOTES - Paul CALORI et Kostja TESTUT
- 2014** FAMILY FOR RENT - Jean-Pierre AMÉRIS  
VALENTIN, VALENTIN - Pascal THOMAS
- 2013** BRÈVES DE COMPTOIR - Jean-Michel RIBES  
SEX, LOVE & THERAPY - Tonie MARSHALL
- 2012** SERIAL TEACHERS - Pierre-François MARTIN-LAVAL  
LE GRAND RETOURNEMENT - Gérard MORDILLAT
- 2011** F.B.I FROG BUTTHEAD INVESTIGATORS - Kad MERAD et  
Olivier BAROUX  
WAR OF THE BUTTONS - Christophe BARRATIER
- 2009** GAINSBURG: A HEROIC LIFE - Joann SFAR
- 2007** A DAY AT THE MUSEUM - Jean-Michel RIBES  
PARIS 36 - Christophe BARRATIER & Julien RAPPENEAU  
TOWARDS ZERO - Pascal THOMAS
- 2006** VATANEN'S HARE - Marc RIVIÈRE
- 2005** LE GRAND APPARTEMENT - Pascal THOMAS  
TWO - Lucas BELVAUX
- 2001** THREE - Lucas BELVAUX  
ACTORS - Bertrand BLIER
- 1999** ALLIANCE CHERCHE DOIGT - Jean-Pierre MOCKY
- 1996** BEAUMARCHAIS THE SCOUNDREL - Édouard MOLINARO
- 1995** HAPPINESS IS IN THE FIELD - Étienne CHATILIEZ  
GUARDIAN ANGELS - Jean-Marie POIRÉ
- 1994** DEAD TIRED - Michel BLANC
- 1993** LOST IN TRANSIT - Philippe LIORET

# GUILAINE LONDEZ

## *SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY*

- 2021** BENEDETTA – Paul VERHOEVEN  
**2020** THE SPEECH – Laurent TIRARD  
**2018** NO FILTER – Éric LAVAINÉ  
THE SUMMER HOUSE - Valeria BRUNI TEDESCHI  
**2017** BREATH OF LIFE - David ROUX  
PHOTO DE FAMILLE – Cécilia ROUAUD  
**2016** ELEMENTARY – Hélène ANGEL  
OPEN AT NIGHT – Édouard BAER  
SALES GOSSES – Frédéric QUIRING  
**2015** BACK TO MOM'S – Éric LAVAINÉ  
**2012** VIVE LA FRANCE - Michaël YOUN  
**2011** THE STROLLER STRATEGY – Clément MICHEL  
**2010** BIENVENUE A BORD – Éric LAVAINÉ  
NO AND ME – Zabou BREITMAN  
**2009** FORBIDDEN HOUSE – Hélène ANGEL  
**2008** THE VERY VERY BIG COMPANY – Pierre JOLIVET  
**2006** COULD THIS BE LOVE? – Pierre JOLIVET  
**2005** JEAN-PHILIPPE – Laurent THUEL  
FOUR STARS – Christian VINCENT  
**2003** ZIM AND CO – Pierre JOLIVET  
**2002** I, CESAR – Richard BERRY  
**2001** L'ART (DÉLICAT) DE LA SÉDUCTION – Richard BERRY  
BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES – Zabou BREITMAN  
**2000** LIBERTÉ OLÉRON – Bruno PODALYDÈS  
SKIN OF MAN, HEART OF BEAST – Hélène ANGEL  
**1995** HAPPINESS IS IN THE FIELD - Étienne CHATILIEZ  
**1990** NIGHT AND DAY – Chantal AKERMAN

# CAST

**Adrien** BENJAMIN LAVERNHE  
Member of the Comédie-Française  
**Sonia** SARA GIRAUDEAU  
**Ludo** KYAN KHOJANDI  
**Sophie** JULIA PIATON  
**The father** FRANÇOIS MOREL  
**The mother** GUILAINE LONDEZ

**Additional roles:** SÉBASTIEN CHASSAGNE  
CHRISTOPHE MONTENEZ  
Member of the Comédie-Française  
ADELINE D'HERMY  
Senior member of the Comédie-Française  
LAURENT BATEAU  
JEAN-MICHEL LAHMI  
SARAH SUÇO  
SÉBASTIEN POUDEROUX  
Member of the Comédie-Française



# CREW

<b>Director</b>	LAURENT TIRARD
<b>Screenplay</b>	LAURENT TIRARD Based on the novel by Fabrice Caro, © Editions Gallimard
<b>Director of Photography</b>	EMMANUEL SOYER
<b>Editor</b>	VALÉRIE DESEINE
<b>Production Designer</b>	ARNO ROTH
<b>Costume Designer</b>	MAÏRA RAMEDHAN LÉVI
<b>Original Score</b>	MATHIEU LAMBOLEY
<b>Sound Dept.</b>	ÉRIC DEVULDER ALEXANDRE FLEURANT OLIVIER DO HUU
<b>Producer</b>	OLIVIA LAGACHE
<b>Co-production</b>	LES FILMS SUR MESURE LE PACTE FRANCE 2 CINÉMA SCOPE PICTURES TAXSHELTER DU GOUVERNEMENT FÉDÉRAL BELGE VIA SCOPE INVEST
<b>With the participation of</b>	CANAL+ C8 CINÉ+ LE PACTE
<b>In association with</b>	CINEVENTURE 5 LA BANQUE POSTALE IMAGE 13 CINÉMAGE 14 CINÉCAP 3
<b>International Sales Distribution</b>	CHARADES LE PACTE

# NOTES



