

PIERRE DELADONCHAMPS

GABRIEL ARCAND

CATHERINE DE LÉAN

A KID

A film by PHILIPPE LIORET



International Sales

LE PACTE

5, rue Darcet

75017 Paris

Tel: +33 1 44 69 59 59

www.le-pacte.com

Fin Août Productions presents

A KID

A FILM BY **PHILIPPE LIORET**

WITH
**PIERRE DELADONCHAMPS, GABRIEL ARCAND
AND CATHERINE DE LÉAN**

98 min - France - 2015 - Scope - 5.1

Press materials available for download on www.le-pacte.com

SYNOPSIS

Mathieu is 33, but he has never met his father. His late mother always told him that he was the result of a casual encounter.

One day, Mathieu receives a call telling him that his father was Canadian, and that he had just passed away. He also discovers that he has two step brothers and decides to go to the funeral in order to meet them. But once in Montreal, he realizes that nobody is aware of his existence or even interested in it. He is alone, in hostile territory...

INTERVIEW WITH PHILIPPE LIORET

“**A KID** is not a mystery film of course, but it is based nevertheless on a revelation which all of us, comedians, technicians and myself, do our best not to give away in order to keep the spectator's discovery intact. Help us to preserve it. Thank you in advance.”

Philippe Lioret

Where does this film come from?

From reading Jean-Paul Dubois's novel, *Si ce livre pouvait me rapprocher de toi*.

It's a great book, one of his best. I had read it a long time ago, and even though I didn't know what film to make of it, it meant something special to me and I couldn't put the book away on the shelf. After WELCOME and ALL OUR DESIRES, I wanted a sunny film and a starting point which is not in the book, but which the book inspired, came to mind: a man discovers he's got two brothers he didn't know about and wants to meet them. We got the rights for the book, but I didn't reopen it; it's only been a source of inspiration, a starting point. But without it, there wouldn't have been a film. And, reading the script, Jean-Paul said to me, “*Make the film, I'll write the book afterwards*”. Nevertheless, the foundation of his book is present, though only keywords are left: father, discovery, brotherhood, Canada, sister. That's the essence really. Apart from the pleasure they give to the reader, books can also be used like that: as inspiration. Adapting a book literally is seldom possible and above all quite useless since a good book can create an impression of grandeur, which no screen, however big it is, can ever render. And that story existed already anyway. I had to seek elsewhere.

The characters in A KID are familiar to me. That boy looking for a family he's never known and who finds a substitute one, has followed me around for a long time. And paradoxically, a film was the best way to tell that particular story. Film has such a power of immersion that if we manage to identify with the characters, they take us with them.

Is there a technique to create that?

Personally, I don't have one. I know my limits, and in order to get passed them, I work. The only thing I know is that you must take the spectator on a journey that they've never made before, and that's why I make it myself first. In A KID, I tried not to limit myself to only

“telling a story”, but to turn following the lives of Mathieu, Pierre, Bettina and Angie into a moment where we feel like we’re just about to solve a mystery concerning ourselves. I believe that the films that troubled me, moved me, and which stayed with me, managed to do so thanks to that feeling of proximity. It was also thanks to the rigor and the apparent simplicity of the story. That is why I’m trying to make the film a testimony to share with others. I want to give person watching the impression that they are living these moments with the characters, that they are by their side and that they feel concerned by what’s happening to them. I want them to be able to say “*I was there*”.

My only “technique” when I’m writing a script is not to make endless versions, but go ahead with them, step by step. And as long as the pages behind me do not seem finished, I don’t go further on. It’s useless to build something on an unstable foundation. And anyway, after having lived with the characters for a while, you come to a point when you know the characters well and where they are almost the ones leading the telling of the story. You only have to follow them, just keeping in mind that the smallest detail out of place may destroy the whole thing – dialogues which are too explicit for example. Like someone, I don’t remember whom, used to say, “*The word is in the gaze*”.

Maybe that’s why this script, although detailed, was less “strict” than the previous ones. This has given the actors and me the possibility to come up with changes at the last minute - sometimes I rewrote the scenes the evening before the shooting and on set, the new suggestions were welcome. It wasn’t a question of improvising, but the actors were given the right to invent, like musicians letting alliterations run under their fingers as they forget the scores.

How did you find these actors?

Mathieu had to have childhood in him - that was the only thing I knew.

I therefore met actors with that idea in mind and according to me it was something nobody being of the age the role required had enough of, and I was desperate. Then I met Pierre Deladonchamps and, from the very beginning, I thought I could sense that childhood part in him. He was also quick to ask the right questions about Mathieu and we discovered together the nature of this man. Then, we could start shooting. I like him very much. He’s sensitive, involved, malicious, and I liked his humour.

As the other characters were Canadians, I didn’t manage to make plans or to picture them while writing.

I had watched many Quebec films before I got to THE DISMANTLING, the beautiful film by Sébastien Pilote in which Gabriel Arcand has got the main role, a film that I can recommend you. After three minutes, I knew that Pierre, Jean’s friend, was this man. I was so certain, I remember myself saying (and I meant it), “*If he can’t or doesn’t want to do it, I won’t do it at all*”. Beneath his gruff look, which was precisely what I looked for in the role of Pierre, Gabriel is somebody with a huge sensitivity which is also one of the reasons he’s so talented. He defends his work as an actor on stage and looks at cinema with suspicion, but when he feels that the film is going somewhere and that somewhere pleases him, and I think that’s been the case here, he starts defending it as if it was his own. He’s got such an amazing charisma and such an instinctive fusion with his character, that he has managed to make a man who one could take as a coward or a bastard at first into a great person.

After him, several weeks of casting in Montréal enabled me to meet Catherine De Léan (grace, fragility and beauty all combined) Pierre-Yves Cardinal (whom I considered brilliant in TOM AT THE FARM by Xavier Dolan); Marie-Thérèse Fortin, a marvel of subtlety (What exactly does Angie know and when did she know what she knows?); Patick Hivon... They’re all amazing actors. Although these “cousins” are French-speaking – all of them are stars in Canada – they are

also North Americans and they've got the involvement of Anglo-Saxon actors. As an example, Pierre (Gabriel Arcand) has to play a waltz by Chopin in the film. Gabriel had started to play the piano at the age of six and had stopped at the age of nine, and today he's sixty-five. Given the technical difficulty of the piece, I asked him to learn the first measure thinking I would double it later. After three months of hard work, he played it all and very well. And Catherine did the same thing. They amazed me.

Is it also because you wanted to work with these new faces that you went to Canada?

No. The place just had to be far away and they had to speak French there. So it was there or in Tahiti... We had to go. If Mathieu had known his father lived in the Jura, his involvement in going to meet his brothers wouldn't have been the same. In this case, he's got to take the plane and leave the country for three days. He also comes to a world where the codes are different from ours and he has to learn them.

What's more, Canada is a country of vast open spaces, a country that "breathes" and this plays a part in the journey that we're making with the film. The country has got more than two million lakes, of which two hundred and fifty thousand are in Quebec alone. Nature is a character. Talking about that, the scene where Mathieu and his two brothers (who don't know that he is their brother) are looking for their father's body in the lake is one of the first I imagined. It was a very decisive image, but the presence of an overwhelming nature was absolutely necessary.

As for the painting bequeathed to Mathieu, it plays an important role as well...

It's called *Young Boy Looking up to the Sky*. It took me months to find it. First I thought, no face, nothing that could be identified. Then

what? Was it to be a sketch, an abstract motif? I kept looking... Then in the end I stumbled upon this painting and it took hold of me instantly. Its story also amused me: no one knows who has painted it. Its value doesn't lie in the painter's signature - it's within itself. The painting is unique... by an unknown father. In my universe, the father has often something to do with it. In *THE LIGHT*, in *DON'T WORRY, I'M FINE*, even in *LOST IN TRANSIT* and in *WELCOME*, the question of fatherhood is present. There must be something in there I haven't settled. Family, first of all, is a place for secrets, a world of silence.

What do you think about the relationship between Mathieu and Pierre?

Pierre is a "warm bear". It's the kind of guy who has gained a sort of wisdom. For example, he's turned his back on money, abandoning lucrative medicine and preferring another type which is far less profit making. He knows that "*you can't eat money*", and all of that impresses Mathieu who, without saying anything, discovers a man that he likes a lot.

Mathieu, on the other hand, is a determined guy. He's crossed the Atlantic Ocean in order to see his brothers and has made up his mind to meet them. Mathieu's stubbornness, his sharp mind and also the part of childhood he's got in him (there we are again) are qualities soon appreciated by Pierre who decides to help him, despite the problems that come along with this decision.

But things go wrong with Mathieu's brothers and he finds refuge in Pierre, his wife, Angie, and their daughter, Bettina, who could even turn into a substitute family for him. Until the discovery... That it would be a shame to reveal to the spectator here.

PHILIPPE LIORET

Filmography

- 2016** A KID
- 2011** ALL OUR DESIRES
- 2009** WELCOME
- 2006** DON'T WORRY, I'M FINE
- 2004** THE LIGHT
- 2001** MADEMOISELLE
- 1997** PROPER DRESS REQUIRED
- 1994** LOST IN TRANSIT

PIERRE DELADONCHAMPS

Filmography

- 2016** **A KID**
by Philippe Lioret
ÉTERNITÉ
by Tran Anh Hung
- 2014** **VIVID**
by Guillaume Foresti
HOUSE OF TIME
by Jonathan Helpert
A CHILDHOOD
by Philippe Claudel
- 2013** **STRANGER BY THE LAKE**
by Alain Guiraudie
(César Award 2014 for Most Promising Actor)
ALL ROUND APPRAISER Q: THE EYES OF MONA LISA
by Shinsuke Sato
- 2008** **SKATE OR DIE**
by Miguel Courtois
- 2007** **A L'OUEST**
by Catherine Esway
- 2006** **SNUFF**
by Gaspard Walter
- 2003** **SUR LA ROUTE**
by Philippe Coroyer (short)
15 MARS
by Antoine Geny
SWITCH
by Aurore Pfeiffer
IDOLE
by Benoît Masocco

GABRIEL ARCAND

Filmography

- | | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|--|
| 2016 | A KID
by Philippe Lioret | 1988 | LA LIGNE DE CHALEUR
by Hubert-Yves Rose |
| 2012 | THE DISMANTLING
by Sébastien Pilote | 1986 | THE DECLINE
OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE
by Denys Arcand |
| 2011 | KARAKARA
by Claude Gagnon | 1984 | AGNES OF GOD
by Norman Jewison |
| 2007 | MOMMY IS AT
THE HAIRDRESSER'S
by Léa Pool | 1983 | MURDER IN THE FAMILY
by Denys Arcand |
| 2005 | CONGORAMA
by Philippe Falardeau | 1982 | LA MÉMOIRE BATTANTE
by Arthur Lamothe |
| 2003 | A WONDERFUL SPELL
by Dominique Cabrera | 1981 | THE PLOUFFE FAMILY
by Gilles Carle |
| 2000 | UNA CASA CON VISTA
AL MAR
by Alberto Arvelo | 1980 | SUZANNE
by Robin Spry |
| 1999 | POST MORTEM
by Louis Bélanger | | THE COFFIN AFFAIR
by Jean-Claude Labrecque |
| 1998 | THE BIG SNAKE
OF THE WORLD
by Yves Dion | 1978 | THE MACHINE AGE
by Gilles Carle |
| 1994 | POUR L'AMOUR DE THOMAS
by Claude Gagnon | 1975 | GINA
by Denys Arcand |
| 1991 | NELLIGAN
by Robert Favreau | 1973 | REJEANNE PADOVANI
by Denys Arcand |
| 1989 | THE REVOLVING DOORS
by Francis Mankiewicz | 1972 | TU BRÛLES, TU BRÛLES
by Jean-Guy Noël |
| | | 1971 | LA MAUDITE GALETTE
by Denys Arcand |

CAST

Mathieu	Pierre Deladonchamps
Pierre	Gabriel Arcand
Bettina	Catherine de Léan
Angie	Marie-Thérèse Fortin
Sam	Pierre-Yves Cardinal
Ben	Patrick Hivon
Anna	Lilou Moreau-Champagne
Rose	Milla Moreau-Champagne
Marina	Hortense Monsaingeon
Carine	Romane Portail
Valentin	Timothy Vom Dorp
Rémi	Martin Laroche
Bettina's friends	Anne-Valérie Bouchard Ansia Wils McCorm-Desjardin Amélie Lafleur Valérie Cadieux

CREW

Director	Philippe Lioret
Screenplay	Philippe Lioret, with the support of Nathalie Carter Loosely adapted from <i>Si ce livre pouvait me rapprocher de toi</i> by Jean-Paul Dubois, published by Les éditions de l'Olivier
Artistic Direction	Colombe Raby Yves Brover
Director of photography	Philippe Guilbert
Editing	Andréa Sedlackova
Sound	Jean-Marie Blondel Éric Tisserand Germain Boulay
Original Music	Flemming Nordkrog
Production	Fin Août (Marielle Duigou and Philippe Lioret)
Coproduction	Item 7 (Pierre Even and Marie-Claude Poulin) France 3 Cinéma
With the participation of	Canal+ - OCS - France Télévisions - Le Pacte - Label M
In association with	Manon 6 - La Banque Postale Image 9
With the participation of	Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée - Société de développement des entreprises culturelles du Québec - Crédit d'impôt cinéma et télévision - Gestion Sodec - Crédit d'impôt pour la production cinématographique canadienne - Téléfilm Canada - Les Films Séville - Super Écran

Le Pacte