

FRÉDÉRIC NIEDERMAYER PRESENTS



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
OFFICIAL SELECTION
2020

CAMÉLIA
JORDANA

NIELS
SCHNEIDER

VINCENT
MACAIGNE

ÉMILIE
DEQUENNE

JENNA
THIAM

GUILLAUME
GOUIX

LOVE AFFAIR(S)

THE THINGS
WE SAY,
THE THINGS
WE DO

A FILM BY
EMMANUEL MOURET



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LOVE AFFAIR(S)

THE THINGS WE SAY,
THE THINGS WE *DO*

a film by Emmanuel **MOURET**

Running time : 2h02

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SYNOPSIS

Vacations in the French countryside. Daphne, three months pregnant, finds herself alone to welcome Maxime, her boyfriend François' cousin. François had to leave in a hurry for Paris to cover for a sick colleague. For four days, while waiting for his return, Daphne and Maxime get to know each other and share very intimate stories that bring them closer...

INTERVIEW WITH EMMANUEL MOURET

Why this title?

It brings up for me one of the great pleasures of cinema, which consists in confronting a character with his own words: will he do what he said? Is he really who he claims to be? Suspense in cinema can also be created through spoken word and it is for the spectator to have fun in measuring the gap between a character's spoken words and the actions that follow. Psychology does not interest me much in cinema, because it seeks to synthesize, to explain, to reduce a character to a definition. The virtue of cinema is to observe the world in its complexity and the characters in their contradictions. This title should also be read with a smile on the lips, a tender irony in the eye. I would like this film to be an ode to our inconstancy.

At a time when we are constantly and harshly called to be coherent and relate our words to our deeds, I choose to side with gentleness and indulgence rather than accusation.

This is not an ideological position, it's my temper, and I must admit that I contradict myself so often that I would not dare blame my peers for it. «We do not go, we are driven; like things that float...we fluctuate between various inclinations; we will nothing freely, nothing absolutely, nothing constantly», I could not take anything away from these words of Montaigne.





We can also think of Diderot whom you adapted in *Mademoiselle de Jonquières (Lady J)*. What connection do you see between the two films?

Yes, there is also a joyful scepticism in Diderot to which I am very sensitive. It is a matter of observing the world in its variety and to love it as such, and not to attempt any conclusion or merely reduce it to a system. On a cinematographic level, it is a matter of marrying the desires, feelings, opinions and contradictions of each of the characters, and make them friendly and beautiful. Even if we could deem Madame de la Pommeraye to be devilish, she was no less touching.

In *Love Affair(s)* there is no vengeance as in *Mademoiselle de Jonquières (Lady J)*, but there is nonetheless the revenge of a neglected woman, with an extraordinary strength of mind and a sure taste for manipulation that can remind you of Madame de La Pommeraye.

Are you referring to Louise's character (Emilie Dequenne)?

Absolutely, it is a fascinating character that continues to fascinate me even after making the film. A truly romantic, yet a very contemporary character. Her gesture is as beautiful and generous as it is troubling and disturbing. It remains difficult to judge. It has panache, it may seem noble. But it is also a revenge.



How did you choose Emilie Dequenue?

I've wanted to work with her for a long time. It is rather her who finally chose me and I am very happy about that. Her acting range is absolutely incredible and everything she acts seems to be so deeply rooted in her flesh that even her face, her voice transformed dramatically. The whole team was astounded by her metamorphosis.

What is striking in your film is that the characters refuse confrontation. Not one of them likes open and direct conflict, except for Gaspard (Guillaume Gouix) and Sandra (Jenna Thiam) perhaps, but this seems to be their relationship model. And as in most of your films, there is no «bad guy», all your characters have good intentions. This rejection of confrontation makes things even more cruel.

I've always felt that there is more drama and cruelty when the characters are scrupulous and caring, than when they have restraint. Man is educated to try to keep a little control over the tyranny of his impulses, without which he threatens the common order and risks being excluded or discredited. I am more moved by a character who has to fight against himself, against the violence of his desires, than by a character who has no limit. The real drama is to be «civilized» and to have to constrain one's impulses and desires.

It is often said that a story is about someone who has a desire and who encounters an obstacle. Rather, I think that, for there to be an interesting story, a character needs to have two irreconcilable desires. There is the obstacle. And this is why some love stories become fascinating, because there are two desires that cannot be reconciled, as in this film, the desire for your companion's cousin and the desire to be a good person.

This would amount to saying that in cinema, violence and cruelty do not need physical violence?

Inner violence seems much more intense to me than external violence in sentimental films, as well as in those featuring criminals. The most tragic moments will be those where the hero, although a murderer by profession, will be faced with a conflict of irreconcilable desires, generally family, love, friendship, and the duty of the group to which he belongs. Caring for another is what makes our relationship to the world as beautiful as cruel and complex.

Camélia Jordana's acting, like Vincent Macaigne's, is all about mixing restraint and intensity, we had rarely seen them like that. How did the casting and direction go for the actors?

I must confess I hardly knew Camélia and it was after watching one of her auditions for another film that I was heartstruck. From our first meeting she understood everything with such speed that I was in awe. I could see that her natural temperament was not the character's and it was an immense pleasure to see her act. She is the first person to whom I said yes and the distribution was done around her.

As for Vincent, we knew each other a little and we wanted to work together. At the beginning, I found him a bit young for the part, I wanted a mature and responsible man, a professionally anchored family man. Vincent's fantasy scared me a little too. But I was won over at the first reading, his softness and sensitivity enchanted me! Vincent was very excited at the idea of aging himself and he took it very seriously, down to the smallest details. The sobriety and tenderness he shows in the film delight me.



Niels Schneider's acting is astonishing, he seems to be a shy, almost clumsy and reserved young man; he is very touching and far from a proud and imposing beauty.

It was a surprise for me and it was far from obvious. Initially, I thought that it was not a part for him, that he was too handsome, that he had too much presence and confidence. But it only took one reading to discover the magnitude of his acting skills. Later, he confessed that this role stuck to him and that this shyness and reserve have more to do with who he really is.

How did the narrative construct of the film take place, it is very particular, sophisticated and baroque...

I wanted a sentimental painting where light stories and more serious ones could coexist and I wanted it all to lead to an end which, in a certain sense, encompasses them all by making them resonate. A sort of small concert of resonances. I wanted a funnel-shaped structure where the different stories would suddenly condense into one.



Do you like stories within stories?

I love them. When two people meet, they often tell each other personal stories, and the telling of these stories can create new ones. This is what happens to Daphne (Camélia Jordana) and Maxime (Niels Schneider), but also to François (Vincent Macaigne). When I was writing, it was very exciting to go from a story to another. I wanted to make a film that was both very playful and very sentimental.

There is a great flow of feelings in your film and many of the characters have an «elastic heart», as a character in your film *Caprice* would say.

Yes, they are characters who love, all of them, without an exception! And it's because they love that they are beautiful, but it's also because they love that everything is so complex and cruel. The principle of exclusivity in love is not respected at all. It could be that I try to say, in spite of myself and in each of my films, that it is not wrong not to be exclusive in love. It can hurt a lot, but it is nonetheless not a moral fault. It is as such. I actually have a friend who told me the film makes you want to fall in love.

You bring up a philosopher in the film and you mention René Girard and the mimetic desire. Does this match your ideas?

I like the theory of mimetic desire (the act of desiring the same desire as another person), it applies very well to cinema where one can like the desires of the characters, much more than the object of their desire. However, I write without theory. I found it amusing how Daphne's character unravels it. I don't have any fixed ideas on a lot of things and that's what I like about movies. Rather than having to pick a side, I prefer embracing different ideas embodied by characters. I am not sceptical by default, but by taste. Every theory has a flavour, it's fun to mix them together and make them dance. As for the philosopher brought up in the film, he is a false philosopher who simply says things that will push the story forward. Philosophical ideas are like fairy tales, they play on with minds, more or less and sometimes unexpectedly... like in the movie.

Are you an authoritative actor/director?

As Jean Renoir says, casting is 80% of the acting direction. After that, we have readings, we talk a little, but once I've chosen an actor, I don't give a lot of directions. It is rather a question of staging, especially since I do a lot of sequence shots with many movements. In the sequence shots, I'm not interested only in the acting continuity, but mainly in the movements, the variety of positions and the kinetics. The more complicated the shot is, the more an actor can surpass himself; being so preoccupied by the movements and the things to do, that the character appears by itself, without the will interacting.



There's a lot of music in the film and it seems like the narrative variety corresponds with the musical variety.

A soundtrack entirely composed for the film would have struggled to keep up with the diversity of the characters. As such, we spent a lot of time on the musical choices and then with the music throughout the editing. The music allows for a sort of emotional acceleration, it's like a purely sentimental voice-over. All these different pieces, Purcell, Mozart, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Poulenc, Satie, live together to give a genuine feel of the variety of feelings.

*Interview conducted by René Marx,
June 2020.*

SOUNDTRACK LIST

Berceuse (opus 7) by Frédéric Chopin	
Valses Sentimentales (34) for piano, D. 779 (Op. 50) N° 5 in B flat Major by Franz Schubert	
Arabesque n°1 by Claude Debussy	
Suite Bergamasque : III Clair de Lune by Claude Debussy	
Original Score by Giovanni Mirabassi . Le Cadeau d’Adieu . Nu Garner	
Les Contes d’Hoffmann Op.67 – Barcarolle by Jacques Offenbach	
Waltz N°2 by Frédéric Chopin	
Final Intro by Cecil Milner	
Stabat Mater RV 621 – Eja Mater, fons amoris by Antonio Vivaldi	
Valse L’Adieu Op. 69 No. 1 in A Flat Posth by Frédéric Chopin	
Sonate pour piano en ré majeur, Hob.XVI/24 – Adagio by Joseph Haydn	
Les contes d’Hoffmann - Les oiseaux dans les Charmilles by Jacques Offenbach	
Sonate pour piano N°59 in en Mi bémol Majeur – Finale, tempo di menuet by Joseph Haydn	
Concerto pour piano en Mi Mineur op.11 – Romance : Larghetto by Frédéric Chopin	
Sonata en ré majeur Hob. XVI/24 « Adagio » by Joseph Haydn	
Waltz N°6 (The Minute Waltz) Op.64 by Frédéric Chopin	
Liberation Afro Beat - El Machete by Martin Perna	

Gayaneh – Berceuse by Aram Khatchaturian	
Sonate pour Piano n°3 in B-Flat, K 281:2 Andante amoroso by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	
Sonate pour piano K.482 Mi bémol Majeur – Adagio by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	
Spanish Dances N°2 by Enrique Granados	
Solvejgs Song by Peer Gynt	
When Night Her Purple Veil by Henry Purcell	
The Seasons, Op. 37b: VI. June: Barcarolle by P.I. Tchaikovsky:	
Sonate pour Piano n°3 in B-Flat, K 281:2 Andante amoroso by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	
Nocturne n°20 by Frédéric Chopin	
Symphony No. 9 in D Major Concerto Piano et Orchestre by Francis Poulenc	
Tosca act III «El lucevan le stelle» by Giacomo Puccini	
Waltz N°7 by Frédéric Chopin	
4 Préludes, Op.28 - 4. In E Minor by Frédéric Chopin	
Gnossienne N°3 by Erik Satie	
Gymnopédies n°1 : Lent et Dououreux by Erik Satie	
Adagio for String by Samuel Barber	
Nocturne n°21 en ut mineur op. posth. by Frédéric Chopin	



FILMOGRAPHY EMMANUEL MOURET

LES CHOSES QU'ON DIT, LES CHOSES QU'ON FAIT <i>Festival de Cannes, Label 2020 Festival d'Angoulême</i>	2020
MADemoiselle de JONQUIÈRES <i>Toronto Film Festival, Platform Nominated for 6 Césars, Winner of Best Costume Award</i>	2018
CAPRICE <i>Festival de Cabourg, Swann d'or for Best Film</i>	2015
LOVERS <i>Locarno Film Festival, Official Competition</i>	2013
THE ART OF LOVE <i>Locarno Film Festival, Official Selection Piazza Grande</i>	2011
FAIS-MOI PLAISIR !	2009
SHALL WE KISS <i>Venice Film Festival, Giornate degli autori</i>	2007
CHANGEMENT D'ADRESSE <i>Festival de Cannes, Directors' Fortnight</i>	2006
VÉNUS ET FLEUR <i>Festival de Cannes, Directors' Fortnight</i>	2003
LAISSONS LUCIE FAIRE	2000
PROMÈNE-TOI DONC TOUT NU ! (medium-length film)	1998
CARESSE (short film)	
IL N'Y A PAS DE MAL (short film)	
MONTRE-MOI (short film)	1994

ARTISTIC SHEET

Daphné **Camélia Jordana**
 Maxime **Niels Schneider**
 François **Vincent Macaigne**
 Louise **Émilie Dequen**
 Sandra **Jenna Thiam**
 Gaspard **Guillaume Gouix**
 Victoire **Julia Piaton**
 Stéphane **Jean-Baptiste Anoumon**

With **Louis-Do de Lencquesaing** in the director's role
 With the participation of **Claude Pommereau** in the philosopher's role

TECHNICAL SHEET

Written and directed by **Emmanuel Mouret**
 Photography **Laurent Desmet**
 Sound **Maxime Gavaudan, François Méreu, Jean-Paul Hurier**
 Set design **David Faivre**
 Editing **Martial Salomon**
 Casting **Constance Demontoy**
 Production **Frédéric Niedermayer, Moby Dick Films**
 International Sales **Elle Driver**
 French Distribution **Pyramide**

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