

Official Selection

tiff

Toronto International
Film Festival 2018



MADemoiselle DE JONCQUIERES

A film by Emmanuel Mouret

SCREENING SCHEDULE

TIFF PLATFORM

FRI. 7, 3:30 PM @ SCOTIABANK 14 (P&I)

SAT. 8, 5:30 PM @ WINTER GARDEN THEATRE (PUBLIC)

SUN. 9, 8:30 AM @ TIFF BELL LIGHTBOX 3 (PUBLIC)

TUE. 11, 9:45 AM @ SCOTIABANK 10 (P&I)

FRI. 14, 10:00 AM @ SCOTIABANK 7 (P&I)

SUN. 16, 9:15 AM @ TIFF BELL LIGHTBOX 3 (PUBLIC)



MADEMOISELLE DE JONCQUIERES

A film by Emmanuel Mouret

Starring

Cécile de France Edouard Baer Alice Isaaz
Natalia Dontcheva Laure Calamy

Runtime: 110min – France – 2018 – Scope – Dolby 5.1

INTERNATIONAL SALES

Indie Sales Company

Sales - Nicolas Eschbach (neschbach@indiesales.eu),
Clémentine Hugot (chugot@indiesales.eu) & Simon Gabriele (sgabriele@indiesales.eu)

Festivals & Sales - Martin Gondre (mgondre@indiesales.eu)

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Touchwood PR

Alma Parvizian

+1 416.593.0777 (ext. 202) | alma@touchwoodpr.com

Justine Gamez

+1 416.593.0777 (ext. 203)

justine@touchwoodpr.com

Jess Harris

+1-416-593-0777 (ext. 209)

jess@touchwoodpr.com

FRENCH RELEASE: SEPT. 12, 2018 (PYRAMIDE DISTRIBUTION)

TRAILER LINK : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dzw5Oybk9M>



SYNOPSIS

1750, Louis XV reigns over the kingdom of France.

The Marquis des Arcis, an assumed libertine, falls madly in love with Madame de La Pommeraye, an attractive widow withdrawn from the world... She resists him for years, and finally gives in to her secret desire. Yet the Marquis quickly tires of her and proposes after two short years to split remaining good friends...

Mad with sorrow, Madame de La Pommeraye seeks revenge on the Marquis and enlists the services of two prostitutes, Madame de Joncquières and her daughter, a young 20-year-old woman of rare beauty...



INTERVIEW WITH EMMANUEL MOURET

Mademoiselle de Jonquières is your 9th feature film and your first costume drama.

When Frédéric Niedermayer, who has produced all my films, mentioned the idea of a costume drama, I immediately thought of a story told by the innkeeper in *Jacques le Fataliste*, Diderot's novel, a story cut by numerous digressions and parentheses, like all the other moments in the book. A story often reread, which had struck me and moved me, especially the ending.

The modernity of this story seemed striking to me, by which I mean that what is modern is what does not age and comes down through the ages. The desires, feelings, impulses, and conflicts that go through the characters and the questions raised by the story seem very contemporary to me. The moral questions of the 18th century are still at work today. During and after the Regency, society was more divided than ever before, like ours is, between profane love, a taste for pleasure, and a more sacred love. Libertines or not, those who lived through those times were as internally divided as we are today.

Robert Bresson already adapted this story by Diderot in *Les dames du bois de Boulogne*.

He adapted this story to his time, 1945. The existence of this film by Bresson obviously intimidated me, but I realized that I was interested in other aspects of the story, notably the character of Madame de La Pommeraye, which I wanted to develop further. That is why I have dwelt not only on the premises of history, but also on its end and epilogue. Moreover, I wished to remain faithful to Diderot concerning the narrative treatment of *Mademoiselle de Jonquières*,

of whom the Marquis is in love. Bresson puts it forward very early while Diderot does it towards the very end: she is for a long time a character in the background, a silhouette, who suddenly takes on a consistency and a depth that illuminates the whole story. I wanted to try to keep this original and emotionally strong «dramatic surprise».

What interested you about immersing yourself in a period film?

Several things. First of all, the Marquis des Arcis and Madame de La Pommeraye possess this mixture of excess and delicate civility that makes this unique flavor and spiciness of the characters of that time! They can argue and reason so brilliantly (to prove or prove to themselves something and the opposite)! Even if we always talk a lot about ourselves or what we feel today, it is something that would seem less «natural» in contemporary characters than in 18th century characters.

Another reason is that a costume drama is a bit like a science fiction film. This distance from our reality can paradoxically bring us closer to our imagination and our inner world. This film is mainly addressed to our sentimental and moral reality much more than to our external reality.

Doesn't the 18th century run through all your previous films?

You say that, because we are used to hearing the characters of that time questioning the amorous or moral customs and that's what my characters often do in my previous films! What particularly touches me in this century is the laboratory element of ideas, utopias, and questioning.

And in Diderot?

In Diderot, it is his taste for paradox, a thought always in movement. He gets closer and further away from his characters unceasingly, shifting from the point of view of one to the other at such well chosen moments. This brings about reversals of value that make up the dynamics of his mind. He constantly questions morality, without ever freezing his thought. He is a moralist, not a moralizer. There is an irony that is never cruel or cynical, but rather, sharp and full of empathy.

The character of Madame de La Pommeraye's friend does not exist in Diderot. Why did you invent it?

The characters of the Marquis and the Marquise are so excessive that I needed a character who embodies an idea of reason and moderation. Without moderation, there is no immoderation. She is also a character to whom I have become very attached. Her friendship with the Marquise is true, considerate, delicate... and little by little she sees her friend moving away like a boat on the sea. I told Laure Calamy that this character could have been the author or narrator of this story. I really appreciated the elegance and inventiveness of her performance.

How do you judge the characters in this story?

This is the question that is at work throughout the film. It is not a story made to deliver a thought, but a story made to make us think. The characters do things that are as laudable as they are hateful. And it is impossible to put them in a box, in a ready-made opinion. When Philip Roth died, I heard this: «Understanding others is not the rule in life. The story of life is to be wrong about them again and again, again and again, relentlessly and, after careful consideration, to be wrong again. That's even how you know you're alive: you're wrong. Perhaps the best thing would be to give up being right or wrong about others, and continue just for the ride.»

I like this word «ride», because it also evokes the time spent in front of a film, the winding path of our thoughts and feelings until the end... and sometimes after the end when the film makes us think.

A resentful woman, capable of every excess to make people pay for her suffering. A fickle man. A mother and daughter who prostitute themselves. But vice and virtue are intertwined. And each of these characters, through the writing, acquires a soul and indeed, virtues.

All these dissimulations, corruptions, lies, betrayals, all this is done in the name of love. None of these characters is spared by love. And if the law (and moral law) condemns anyone who does evil in the name of love, fiction does not. Medea may kill, but she loves. It's the same for the Marquise, she avenges herself diabolically, admirably even, cruelly, but she loves. Something in us, in cinema, in literature, makes us love people who love. This is a very strange law. And it doesn't necessarily work in the real world.

Is this Diderot's materialistic, almost Renoirian side?

Yes, I think it's right to quote Renoir alongside Diderot. He doesn't assume rights to the intimacy and convictions of his characters. He could be a materialist who claims indisputable demonstrations. But he never makes them, because he remains open to question. Diderot often defended the beautiful power of passions against the classical spirit, but this does not prevent him from being critical of his own convictions.

We think of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, contemporary to *Jacques le Fataliste*. The noble characters, the manipulation, the cruelty, the opposition between libertinage and devotion exist in both texts.

The big difference is that there is no cynicism in Diderot, the characters are not disillusioned. However, Madame de Merteuil and Madame de La Pommeraye undeniably have things in common. Diderot, like Laclos, portrays women whose intelligence surpasses that of men and it is not a common feature in the literature of yesteryear. Moreover, they are both independent women, because they are noble and widows. It should not be forgotten that noble widows and rich courtesans are the first women who do not depend on the authority of a husband.

Madame de La Pommeraye has words that could be described as feminist. She says that her revenge will avenge all women.

She uses these words, especially with her friend, to justify her machination. It's something very new for the time. The idea of women's emancipation began to emerge at this time. The ideological edifice of the old regime is cracking on all sides, and we know the important participation of women at that time in feeding this laboratory of new ideas. Like Madame d'Epinau, for example. But Madame de La Pommeraye is above all devoured by pain. Although she uses arguments that may coincide with our concerns today, such as the

need to correct men, she does not hesitate to use and manipulate two weak, poor, humiliated women. She is prepared to destroy them by her manipulations, to risk making them die of despair. So, she is an independent woman, of course, but she's capable of crushing other women to satisfy her revenge. It's really Diderot who is the feminist. He wrote *La Religieuse* (The Nun)! He is able to think about oppression, to defend the freedom of everyone in mutual respect.

The film is also very feminine, with four female characters for one male character.

Yes, it was something that was very stimulating for me, four very different portraits of women, each with their own character and history. Each has such a special destiny that there is little resemblance between them.

At the heart of all this is the portrait of a woman taking revenge.

Revenge in cinema is interesting to film, because it prolongs our imagination, it makes us travel to countries where our superego prevents us from going. Madame de La Pommeraye is fascinating for her excesses, she allows herself behavior that most of us would only let ourselves to imagine. And she does it with amazing intelligence.

We have never seen Cécile de France interpret such a character.

How did you come up with the idea of working with her? I must admit that I didn't have the idea right away, and when I thought about it, it didn't seem obvious to me. But after doing a reading, I had no more doubts. I was convinced she was going to be great. And she was beyond my expectations! She worked on her character for three months with a discipline I had never seen before. We both worked a lot on each scene. Then on the set, I didn't give her any more instructions. It was all there, right from the 1st take. The character was totally hers. We only had to concentrate on the movements, the interplay with the camera... the directing.

Edouard Baer is incredibly natural. He speaks the language of the 18th century as if it were his own.

It is his, in a way. When you listen to him and see him, he is a marquis! Edward was an obvious choice. His eloquence, his distinction, his relaxed nature made all the dialogues fit him like a glove.

The Marquis, for whom the Marquise is a confidante, hides nothing. He is sincerity and spontaneity itself.

He is sincere even in his life as a seducer. He says: «I don't seduce, I am seduced». That is why he seduces, because he is more sincere than most men. He's someone with a taste for truth, a true free thinker. When I saw his theatrical work on *Un Pedigree* by Modiano, I was absolutely convinced that Edouard could interpret sincerity in such a unique, beautiful and profound way.

He is truly like Diderot. Even physically, in his somewhat sloppy, neglected appearance, according to what we know of him.

Absolutely. The neglected look is not just a pose, it is an elegant attention which aims not to impose on others by appearances of perfection or rigor. It's a writing style too. Diderot's is simple and lively... and free. It's what we wanted, for the Marquis, with Pierre-Jean Larroque, the costume designer: clothes whose relaxed style and colors go through time to the present day. They do not seek to show the Marquis' social rank or fashion.

How did you work on the costumes?

I went with Pierre-Jean's immense talent. The idea was to create silhouettes that stand out on the set. So, we worked together on the costumes with the set designer, David Faivre, and the director of photography, Laurent Desmet. We wanted an image stripped of frills, and which didn't look dusty or old. In fact, we wanted something new with clear lines. The late 18th century was the end of the Ancien Régime, but it was a time full of vitality and constant invention, with a sense that a new world was coming.

On screen, the faces are filmed with particular attention. In the same shot, we see them blush, turn pale, change expression, often violently, as is rarely seen in cinema. There are a lot of sequence shots in *Mademoiselle de Jonquières*, which is quite rare in period films. The custom is that in a costume drama, we cut a lot to show the sets and highlight what the characters feel. What I wanted to bring out was the text without being too insistent on the characters' psychology. It seemed unnecessary to me to multiply the close-ups. I conceived all the sequence shots with a lot of character movements where you never stop for a long time on a face, a profile or a back so that the audience

are always active, trying to imagine what is going on in the characters' minds, what is hidden behind their eyes. These sequence shots serve not to say too much, not to underline too much what the text evokes, but it is also one of the joys of film to see actors playing without them being cut off, as if we were witnessing their exchange for real. I find that exciting.

Landscapes are not so common in your cinema. Here they take on an importance, with the gardens and ponds...

One of the two favorite occupations of the nobility at that time was walking. The other is self-examination. They can go together.

Mademoiselle de Jonquières seems to step out of a portrait by Chardin or Fragonard. Her beauty is dazzling and we immediately understand that she is perfect bait... How did you think of Alice Isaaz?

I immediately thought of her, I had discovered her in a film three or four years ago. I liked her not only for her beautiful cinogenic presence, but also for her strong temperament. She had to be self-effacing for three quarters of the film then, suddenly, her character appears and contrasts with what we have seen, that is to say, this girl is not just a docile puppet, but a person of flesh, ideas and strong, high aspirations.

She's a prostitute and perhaps the most virtuous character in the film?

It is the spirit of Diderot again: virtue is not where we expect it.

Her mother, played by Natalia Dontcheva, is a striking character.

She is perhaps the character who has gone through the most difficulties. She has no moral or amorous

ambition, one might think she is disillusioned and opportunistic, but she is nothing of the sort, her daughter is more important to her than everything else. She will do anything to make her safe. Of these four portraits of women, she is the only mother.

Why this title?

First, because the text did not have a title, one had to be found. Then, because I wanted, from the beginning of the film, to give great importance to this character (Mademoiselle de Jonquières) who may seem secondary for a long time. It's a way to prepare the ending, without revealing it. The character is portrayed in *taglio*, mysteriously enough to feed our projections, like those of the Marquis. I think that the more unfathomable this young woman remains to him, the more one understands his irrational attraction, and the more poignant and disturbing the final twist can be.

The Age of Enlightenment is obsessed with the power of reason. As far as affairs of heart and desire are concerned, everything is complicated. Here, the characters seem trapped in their own desires.

But has anything changed since then? To what law should reason in love be subjected? And do we really love when we're reasonable? It seems that the questions are perhaps more important than the answers. And it is perhaps on our troubles that the Enlightenment has cast the most clarity.

Interview by René Marx, June 1, 2018





A few excerpts...

Between Madame de La Pommeraye and the Marquis des Arcis

- *I do tire of repeating myself and having to drive this obsession from your mind.*
- *My heart, Marquise.*
- *But who knows where the heart hides? Yours is so filled with wit that one cannot be sure.*

- *I only believe in friendship. Love, when coupled with flesh, grows as fragile as flesh itself, and is easily bruised.*
- *Love is an insult for those who have none.*

Between Madame de La Pommeraye and her friend

- *Why would the Marquis grow attached to this girl when he attaches to no-one?*
 - *Because the Marquis cannot resist what resists him. And if at one time I inspired lofty sentiments in him, they were in proportion to my resistance.*
- Have you never observed that love grows when the object of our desires escapes us?*
- *For my part, I believe language is correct to put «happiness» just a pin's drop away from «hapless».*
 - *Madame, you are wrong: happiness that doesn't last is called pleasure.*

 - *If no just souls attempt to improve men, how can we hope for a better society?*

EMMANUEL MOURET'S FILMS

- 2018 **MADemoiselle de Joncquieres**
2015 **CAPRICE**
Cabourg festival - Swann d'or for best film
2013 **LOVERS**
Locarno festival - official competition
2011 **THE ART OF LOVE**
Locarno festival - official competition, Piazza Grande
2009 **FAIS-MOI PLAISIR !**
2007 **SHALL WE KISS**
Venice festival - Giornate Degli Autori
2006 **CHANGEMENT D'ADRESSE**
Cannes festival - Directors' Fortnight
2003 **VÉNU& FLEUR**
Cannes festival - Directors' Fortnight
2000 **LAISSONS LUCIE FAIRE**
1994-1998 **PROMÈNE-TOI DONC TOUT NU !** (medium-length film)
CARESSE (short film)
IL N'Y A PAS DE MAL (short film)
MONTRE-MOI (short film)



CAST

Madame de La Pommeraye Cécile de France
Marquis des Arcis Édouard Baer
Mademoiselle de Joncquières Alice Isaaz
Madame de Joncquières Natalia Dontcheva
Madame de La Pommeraye's friend Laure Calamy

CREW

Director Emmanuel Mouret
Screenplay and adaptation Emmanuel Mouret
freely inspired by a story by Denis Diderot
Production Frédéric Niedermayer
Assistant director Juliette Maillard
Casting Constance Demontoy
Production manager Éric Chabot
Photography Laurent Desmet
Sound Maxime Gavaudan
..... François Méreu
..... Mélissa Petitjean
Costumes Pierre-Jean Larroque
Hair Jeanne Milon
Set design David Faivre
Editing Martial Salomon

Executive producer Moby Dick Films
Co-produced with Arte France Cinéma & Reborn Production
With the support of Région Île-de-France & Région des Pays de la Loire
..... in partnership with the CNC
With the support of Procirep
With the participation of Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image animée
Distribution France Pyramide
International sales Indie Sales



INDIE | SALES

WWW.INDIESALES.EU

 facebook.com/indiesales