

JACQUES PERRIN AND NICOLAS MAUVERNAY PRESENT



AFTER "THE CHORUS"  
(LES CHORISTES)

# PARIS 36

A FILM BY  
**CHRISTOPHE BARRATIER**



# 1936 in France

A story of friendship, a story of love and brotherhood - PARIS 36 is all these, to be sure. But it's probably more than that, since it turns on the sometimes conflicted but always affectionate relationships between three friends - Pigoil, Milou and Jacky - all struck head on by unemployment (a consequence of the 30's financial crisis) - as well as Douce a pretty young girl from the provinces who has come to Paris looking to hit it big and Monsieur Radio, an aging musician whose unhappy love affair has led him to withdraw from the world around him.

It's the end of 1935, on the eve of the new year and the setting is a working class neighborhood in Paris - a neighborhood dreamed up for us by Christophe Barratier drawing on Montmartre and Ménilmontant, two former villages annexed by the capital, which they overlook from atop their modest hillsides. This imaginary town, where a provincial life can still be lived in its entirety is perceived in sumptuous panoramic shots and through several luxurious and decadent cabaret scenes.

While the Paris quarter in the film is surely a product of Christophe Barratier's poetic fantasy, it nevertheless reflects an historic reality. Paris, at the time, did indeed possess dozens of small concert venues and especially vaudeville music halls. These popular pleasure centers also drew a part of their patrons from industrial quarters, thus forming a vast admixture where social barriers have not yet been set up.

France in 1936 also marked the explosion of the «POPULAR FRONT.» In the spring of 1936, the poorest classes of French society sweep aside the old political guard of a French republic riddled with financial scandals and immoral maneuvering. Answering this groundswell of support mustered by leftist - socialist, communist and anarchist - a violent reaction was organized among the right-wing nationalists, openly fascinated by the triumphant examples of Benito Mussolini in Italy and Adolf Hitler in Germany. That reaction is represented in PARIS 36 by the S.O.C., a fascist-leaning quasi-military militia.

It is in that historical context that our three friends join together and try to revive the dream of the old Chansonnia theater, threatened with demolition. Three comrades with a passion for music, love and liberty will make their stand there, attempting to strike down the ambient brown plague, that hulking beast which has already spread through Europe and which is about to drag the entire world with it into the grips of war.

Jacques Perrin and Nicolas Mauvernay

present

Gérard  
Jugnot

Clovis  
Cornillac

Kad  
Merad

Pierre  
Richard

Bernard-Pierre  
Donnadieu

Nora  
Arnezeder

Maxence  
Perrin

# PARIS 36

(FAUBOURG 36)

A film by  
Christophe Barratier

Running time: 2:00

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## SYNOPSIS



**T**he story takes place between December 1935 and July 1936 in a working-class neighbourhood on the north-eastern edge of Paris. The springtime election of a left-wing government brings wild new hopes, yet also sees the rise of extremist ideas. Three unemployed stage workers decide to occupy the music hall where they worked until just a few months ago to produce a «hit show». The stage is set for a short-lived but wonderful adventure.



**After the enormous success of «Les Choristes» (The Chorus), how easy was it to find a subject for your second film?**

Everybody was telling me, «We'll see who gets the last laugh next time.» Strange, how everybody in this business seems to want the last laugh. It's as if they're secretly hoping for the worst rather than for the best. And chief among those waiting for the last laugh was myself. At first, I thought it was best not to rush into anything. I turned down every offer that came my way, even from the United States. It was easy - nothing really tempted me. I never heeded the good and well-intentioned advice I was given - to break the image I had from «Les Choristes» (The Chorus) by making a thriller or an R-rated film, not to do another film featuring music or songs and definitely not with Jugnot. But the only question that interested me was, «Why should I do anything other than what I really wanted to?» After a film which was an adaptation, I knew that my salvation would come from an original script, proving my ability to write a good story by myself. The best way of getting free of the pressure was by following what really motivates me, finding characters and subject matter that really got me excited and with whom I could identify. You can't be afraid of looking like yourself. I never thought about what film would attract eight million people or what people wanted to see. Especially since it's well known that that's just not how it works - in fact, it's exactly the opposite.

**So how did you come by the idea for Paris 36?**

I remembered a musical comedy project that was brought to Galatée Films over ten years ago by Reinhardt Wagner, Frank Thomas and Jean-Michel Derenne. They were looking for a screenwriter and a director. Along with Jacques Perrin, with whom I was working at that time on the production of Microcosmos, several treatments were written but it never got past that stage. All we did was regularly pick up the options. The project was dormant. I remembered the songs, the world they evoked, the times to which they were linked. I felt I could put everything I loved into it, starting with the music. In the summer of 2005, after the promotional tour for «Les Choristes» which

took me all over the world, I buckled down and started working on Paris 36. I worked exclusively on it, all alone, turning down all offers - festivals, meetings, projects, etc. I took the existing elements in Frank and Reinhardt's songs, letting myself get carried away by their stories and I embarked upon a long research stage, not only historical research but artistic as well. I studied the novels, films, pictures and paintings of the time. Little by little, it all came to me - the characters, the love story, the little music hall threatened with bankruptcy, the laundry factory decor, this chronicle of a neighbourhood, the father-son story, all set against a backdrop of fraternity and latent tension which was so characteristic of the Popular Front period.

**What principles guided you?**

I wanted to make a universal story that everyone could identify with, without necessarily knowing about that period of time. As a filmmaker I'm irresistibly drawn to big, beautiful stories. I can't get excited about little things from real life, day-to-day things. I don't mind making movies that are romanesque, sentimental, fictional. They are a far cry from a certain kind of cinéma vérité, which I appreciate, by the way, as a viewer. I want to tell stories more beautiful than life... or else darker than life. Extreme, in any case. I'm a sentimental person, who likes to experience emotion and share it. Several cinematic forms could co-exist within this project - film noir, comedy, drama and musical comedy. And it was possible to segue from one to the other. That was the challenge, to paint a fresco like telling a tale. A sort of «Once upon a time in Paris...» That's why I didn't want to include any specific references. The name «faubourg» [from the original French title Faubourg 36] doesn't refer to any specific neighbourhood in Paris and that is in keeping with this principle. In fact, the films shot during the Popular Front period only rarely gave precise indications about names of places, streets and dates. That was one of the earmarks of Carné's and Prévert's poetic realism. That's why I asked Jean Rabasse to deliberately change the city's geography. From our faubourg, both the Eiffel Tower and the Sacré Cœur could be seen. It's not Ménilmontant, not Montmartre or Belleville, but a little of each



all mixed together. I also liked the idea that the faubourg was a border between the urban and the working class suburbs which were still rural in spite of the gas reserves and the factory smokestacks. We can't make out exactly where we are, the audience has to imagine it. That's also why I didn't use any of the original period songs, except for a few which are mixed in the background, as if they were coming from a radio. Since we recreated the faubourg, we had to recreate the songs as well. If you're going to recreate a universe, then you have to do it all the way. For this very reason, I didn't use the names of the actual political parties of the period, except for the Popular Front. I made up a name for the extreme right party - S.O.C. (for Solidarity Order Combat) and the CGT is referenced simply as «the Guild.» I wanted to recreate the context of a time, whose preoccupations sometimes echo what's going on today - purchasing power, job security, prevalent xenophobia. And I wanted to show that at the very moment when French people were enjoying their first taste of certain freedoms, the seeds of a war that would tear the world asunder just three years later were already being sown. I wanted the drama to be felt progressively, without tackling it head on, showing how on July 14th, 1936, the French were dancing on the edge of a cliff. But my approach was not to make an historical

chronicle but a chronicle of daily life. From History were born stories. And, last but not least, I wanted unabashed imagination. The last shot of the film - which can be interpreted as a nod to Les Enfants du Paradis - is a curtain closing. As at the end of a performance.

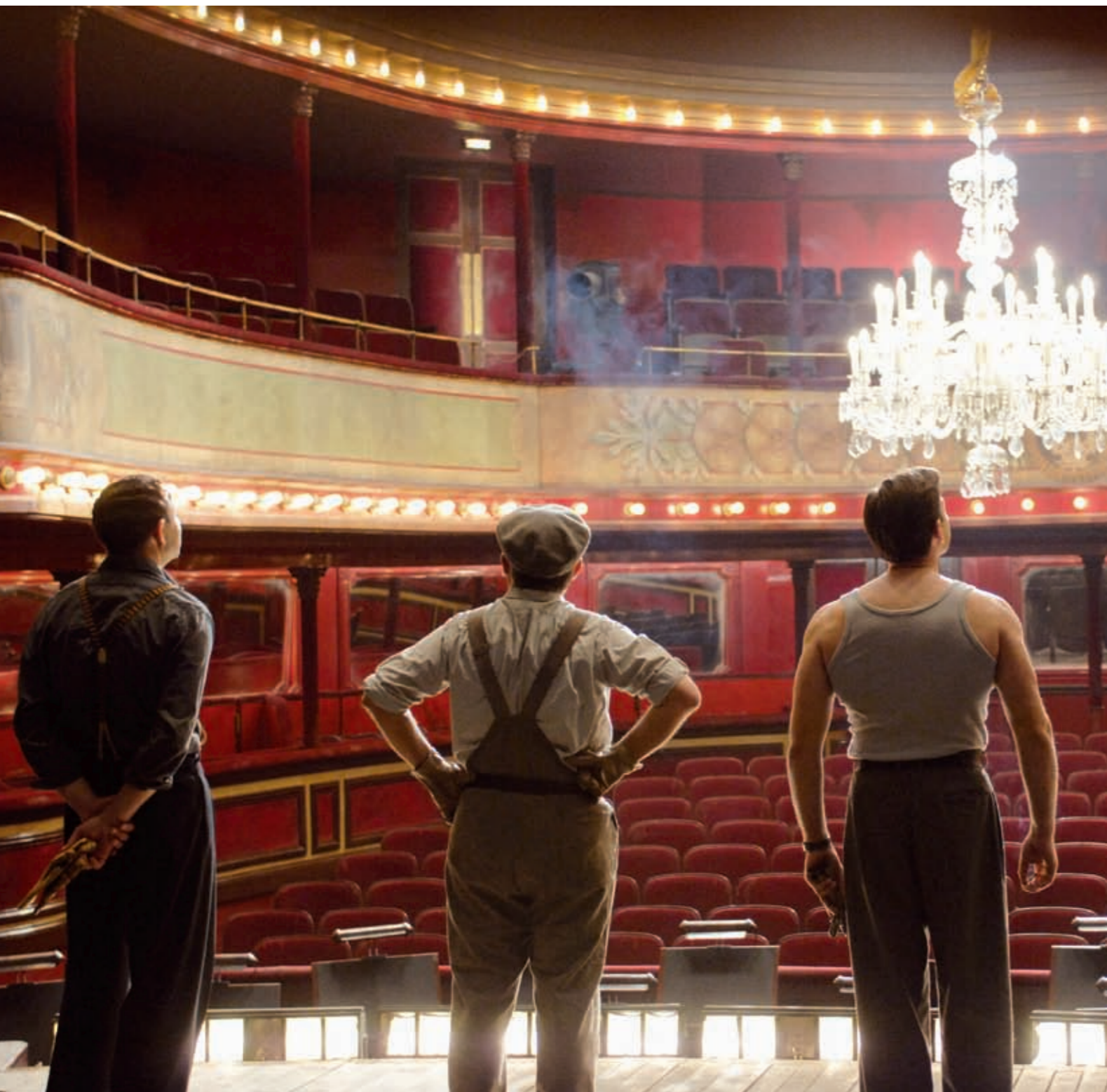
**What was the hardest element in the writing of the screenplay?**

To make it a film which is not a round robin of parallel destinies, but a story in which several protagonists are brought together by chance. It's often said that if the idea for a film can't be expressed in one sentence, it means the idea isn't clear. From the moment I could say, «Paris 36 was the story of several characters with varying motivations who come together around a common goal - saving their livelihood,» things went much more smoothly. Striking a balance between the characters was tricky, especially since one protagonist had to emerge and drive the main story line. That role is given to the character of Pigoil, played by Gérard Jugnot. He opens and closes the movie, everything is organized around him. Another difficulty was undercutting the clichés - the girl singer who wants to make it, the evil despot who rules the neighbourhood, the struggling worker... These were all undeniably necessary elements but they had to be treated in a unique and interesting way. In the first treatment, everything was too









long. There were many more twists and turns, many more events along the way. Each of the characters did and thought lots of different things. But all that complexity just created confusion. It was nevertheless an indispensable first stage of the work. It's more fruitful to start with characters you have too much to say about than the opposite. From there, it's like cooking. You boil it down, concentrate it, let it rest, and only the essential stuff remains.

**Was it to get to that stage that you called on your writing partner, Julien Rappeneau?**

That's right. When I had finished the first draft of the screenplay, I thought of Julien Rappeneau. I had seen *Bon Voyage* and some other films he had written. I knew (Kad [Merad] had introduced him to me) that he was easy to get along with, open and hard-working, and that collaborating with him would be easy. Apart from talent, those are requisite qualities for someone you're going to write with. I started by consulting him and then we wound up writing together for over a year. Julien never hesitates to work and re-work things. He's always willing to take a new look at what we've done, never lets ego get in the way, and he has an excellent sense of structure. What's more, we laugh at the same things and that makes the work much more pleasant.

**Did you have any cinematic references in mind? Was there a lot of documentation involved?**

The references were there. René Clair, Carné, Prévert, Duvivier, Clouzot... *La Belle équipe* [They Were Five], *Le Jour se lève* [Daybreak], *Pépé le Moko*, not to mention lesser known films like Jean Boyer's *Prends la route*, and films shot later like *Quai des Orfèvres* [Jenny Lamour]. Then, of course, for the musical numbers, nothing short of Busby Berkeley! Along with the photography of Doisneau and Brassai which were the best documentation one could wish for. The films don't lie, or rather they lie the way people lied at the time and that's what's interesting. But we did do a lot of documentation and research. My meeting with Pierre Philippe, an extremely cultured filmmaker and writer, helped me a lot in my research on the realistic elements and flavors of the time. He is without doubt the leading specialist in French vaudeville. One of his books, *L'Air et la Chanson*, published by Grasset, is a veritable gold mine. I owe numerous details to it. Of course, I pored through the newspapers - *Le Populaire*, *Le Parisien*, *L'Intransigeant* and even *l'Action Française* - in order to soak up the tone and the spirit of the time as much as I could. A lot can be learnt from reading the chronicles and the editorials. Not to mention the works of Pierre MacOrlan and Francis Carco or less remembered writers like Clément Lepidis, Eugene Dabit, Henri Calet. Knowing the stuff of daily life was more important for the film than all the statistics in the world. It's fairly easy to find out what the unemployment rate was in 1936, it's a lot harder to figure out exactly how Frenchmen lived back then, especially among the working classes and the poor. Lépidis recounts how his grandmother used to go to get the milk at a farm in La Plaine Saint-Denis... If little Jojo drinks his milk in the living room, it's because working class apartments at the time often had only two rooms - and of course there was no bathroom. The walls weren't very soundproof and so there was always the sound of a radio coming from somewhere. These are nearly subliminal details but they make all the difference - as long as you don't fall into the trap of

the «right-down-to-the-last-detail» research. You have to be careful of what's exhaustive. Sometimes it hurts, but anything that doesn't help the story has got to go.

**Did you have specific actors in mind when you were writing the screenplay?**

Sure. Gérard, Kad, Clovis... What Gérard and I experienced together on «*Les Choristes*» has made us close for life. In spite of his resumé, he is anything but blasé. It might be said that I benefited from his experience and that I brought him the emotion of music. I think that touched him. It was only natural that, after my first film, I wanted that adventure to continue. All I needed to do was to tell him the story of Paris 36 one night, and I was sure that he would want to be a part of it. The same went for Kad. I really wanted to give him a real, prominent role after «*Les Choristes*». I've known him for a long time, he was in my first short subject. When I cast him in «*Les Choristes*», he was still the Kad from «*Kad and O*» and not Kad Merad, much less the box office record holder. I was the first to put my money on him as a «serious» actor. He has very wide range and he is gifted with great instincts for human nature. As for Clovis, I had been itching to work with him for a long time. I thought of him as I wrote, betting that he would accept the part. I didn't know him at all but I couldn't see anybody else for the role. I told him about the idea and his reaction was, «Why not?» Then he read the script and he was convinced. He had commitments for the theater but he worked it out so he could do the film. He is I believe, one of the foremost of today's actors on the stage. That made for some pretty widely varying backgrounds on the set, but they all became friends. I was very happy about that.

**How would you define their characters?**

That brings us right back to references! I saw Pigoil, Gérard Jugnot's character, as being similar to the roles played by Bernard Blier or Jack Lemmon, a sort of everyman who, in the beginning, doesn't really have a lot of courage, isn't very strong, nothing like a youthful hero, but who, through the course of the events he encounters, finds the strength to become an accidental hero. The roles of Pigoil and the kid, Jojo, played by Jugnot and Maxence, are like a spiritual sequel to «*Les Choristes*» - this is how Clément Mathieu might have brought up Pépinot. The character of Jacky Jacquet, played by Kad, is in the tradition of the great eccentrics played by Jean Tissier, Le Vigan or Carette. I relied a lot on the sort of childlike candor that emanates from Kad and which I really appreciate. Kad and Jacky Jaquet have one thing in common - they're always a little amazed at being where they are. Finally, Clovis' character, Milou, is a sort of Reggiani or Gabin. Like them, he sort of embodies that working class aristocracy which is so typical of the period. Plus he's got that streetwise speech pattern that fit the part like a glove. Milou is a proud man, who has adopted the attitude of someone indestructible. That doesn't mean he doesn't chat up the girls by deforming the facts a little. Until one day he meets Douce. It's just like Gabin - he seems trapped inside his character until the moment he falls in love.



**At the same time, you've made an ambiguous character out of the part played by Kad, someone who doesn't mind being mixed up with right-wing elements in order to get ahead.**

It seemed to me indispensable that one of the main characters crosses the line into something unmentionable, even shameful. There were vivid expressions of xenophobia at the time and they were practically commonplace. Slipping them into the landscape wasn't going to do much, whereas using it in the story through the arc of a character was very helpful for our theme and added some rough patches for the character of Jacky. Everyone knows that some people sold their souls to the devil at the time, associated with some pretty shady characters, repulsive opinions and later with the enemy - if it helped them advance their careers. They were nevertheless not monsters, only sadly human, alas.

**You had no fear about giving the character of Douce to a young unknown, Nora Arnezeder.**

The character of Douce was the most difficult to write. To wipe out clichés, I always ask myself how I would react in a given situation. I try to inject my own complexity, my own fears and whatever it is that makes me unique. A female character requires more imagination. What's more, we were starting with a situation which might seem a little cant. A young singer arrives in Paris, hoping to become a star. How do you find her ambiguities, her rough edges? Meeting Nora influenced the character. At first, I had imagined a character who was about 25 or 30. When we started casting, I realized that if this girl were 30 years old, then we're not talking about a young and naive girl, but rather a self-interested flirt, not far from stupid. When you're thirty, you've got a past, you come with your story. But at 20, it's rather normal to get all enthusiastic, then change your mind, give up and start all over again. So that was the ideal age for the character. She was about to discover life. In addition, it was absolutely imperative that the one who played Douce be a good singer. So, rather than looking for an actress who could sing, I went looking for a singer who could act, like Jean-Baptiste Maunier in «Les Choristes». Discovering new talent is one of the pleasures of this profession. It's practically a duty. And I also thought it would be more fun for the audience to discover an unknown talent playing the role of an unknown. It would be a total surprise. We held six months of auditions with young women, known and unknown. Nora had auditioned among the first of them. Deep down, I always thought it would be her. I continued auditioning in order to explore every possibility but the more I looked at the tapes, the more I was convinced.

**What's her best quality for the part of Douce?**

She was exceptional in the singing part of the audition. And she was very convincing as well, in the acting part. Physically, she reminds one of Michelle Morgan or Grace Kelly, or maybe Annabella. She's very beautiful, has a real inner strength, but she also is incredibly whimsical. I found in her what I liked in Jean-Baptiste. They're both people who haven't got a lot of experience, who have all kinds of doubts and are never sure of themselves before a take, but who very quickly come up to the level of their partners and leap off the screen. What is similar about Nora and Jean-Baptiste is that you have to reassure them but they never worry you. They can be counted on. She has the talent, the looks, the voice quality, but beyond that she has something really powerful, the stuff of an artist.

**Another discovery, another revelation. Maxence Perrin, Jacques' son, who plays the kid Jojo. Is it easy directing your cousin?**

Maxence is indeed my little cousin but on the set, I treat him like an actor. I couldn't get over how much he looked like Jacques Perrin at the same age - and observant movie buffs will recognize him in Carné's *Les Portes de la nuit* [Gates of the Night]. I had already directed him in «Les Choristes», where he played little Pépinot. His relationship with Gérard in *Paris 36* is practically an extension of «Les Choristes». He's very gifted. He's now getting to an age where he's going to have to learn to cultivate his talent and move up through the ranks. Once he does that, he could do anything.

**There are some striking supporting roles in Paris 36 - Pierre Richard, Bernard-Pierre Donnadiou, François Morel, Julien Courbey, Eric Naggar...**

Ever since I was a kid, I've been a fan of actors and I always remember the names of those I liked in movies, television or the theater, those I'd like to work with. Here, thanks to the sheer number of characters, I got a chance to use a whole bunch! Galapiat, played by Donnadiou is intelligent and manipulative like Jules Berry in *Le Jour se lève* [Daybreak] or Claude Dauphin in *Casque d'or* [Golden Marie]. I didn't want to fall into the trap of the one-hundred-percent evil bad guy. I wanted someone who could be threatening and, at the same time, touching. Bernard-Pierre, whom we don't see enough in movies, knew how to bring about that disturbing feeling - he doesn't have to do too much to seem threatening, even when he says «I love you» it can be scary! - but all the while maintaining a fragile aspect. After all, his Achilles' heel, as for the devil in *Les Visiteurs du soir* [The Devil's Envoys], is love. Monsieur Radio - played by Pierre Richard - is an aging and quirky man who, because of a broken heart, decides never to leave his home again. For twenty years, he has spent his days listening to the radio, until one day destiny leads him to regain his former splendor. Pierre was one of the two or three most popular French actors in the seventies and eighties. Then, as with all the great comic actors including Chaplin, he decided to dim the lights on his character. Although Pierre is now no longer «the distracted one,» he is nevertheless still possessed by his former glory, just like Monsieur Radio. He has a very handsome face, fantastic eyes, impressive carriage - and all that corresponds to what Monsieur Radio, talented musician and conductor, should be. Plus, Pierre brings something physical to the table, and an orchestra conductor is a very physical thing! He's also got some burlesque, some carefree and poetic qualities that took the character well beyond what was on the page. That's true as well for François Morel, who brought the character of Célestin into a poetic and comic dimension which reached well beyond the script.

**The musical part - Douce's songs, the song-and-dance numbers at the «Chansonnia» - is extremely important in Paris 36. How did your collaboration with Reinhardt Wagner and Frank Thomas go?**

Their songs and the world they evoked were my point of departure. Along the way, as I wrote the script, I dropped a few of them and asked them to write some others. For example, «Le Môme Jojo,» «Attachez-moi,» and «Enterrée sous le bal» were there from the start, but «Partir» - illustrating the Popular Front's themes of hope - was written at my request. Reinhardt, a cinematic musician with classical training, has always been interested in songwriting. He is an excep-





tional melody maker. Frank Thomas is more than a lyricist, he's a poet working in very different styles. He's capable of writing «Les Dalton» for Joe Dassin, «Le téléphone pleure» for Claude François, but also «Dites-moi» for Michel Jonasz and Berliner's «Louise». Several hundred songs by him have been recorded. A great career. He's a very cultivated man, a true author.

#### **Another essential collaborator in the project was the set designer. Why did you choose Jean Rabasse?**

As for the actors, I went looking for people who were best suited for the project. I very quickly noticed that we couldn't shoot on location. The working class Paris of the thirties has completely disappeared - except for a few streets in Montmartre. We had to build everything. By asking myself who was a great set decorator specializing in the design, but especially the construction of large sets, I very quickly settled on Jean Rabasse, whose work outside the cinema I also very much admired, notably for Le Cirque du Soleil. Luckily, he was available! We started working on a Paris which was at once recognizable and unknown, a little like what they did in the period films, which take place on the outskirts of the city. There are little farms as well as workshops and factory smokestacks, vacant lots and small buildings, fences and walls- the city can almost be made out in the distance. In the middle of the countryside, about twenty-five miles outside of Prague, we reconstructed this little square of Paris and, of course, the music hall as well. Exterior and interior. When I was writing, I started looking for something my characters could do together, a project that would unite them Going through the historical sources, I noticed that the neighbourhood music hall was a recurring and ubiquitous element and so I invented «Le Chansonnia.» My goal was not to make an homage to vaudeville but to find a good pretext to make a film where music, dance and performance would have a place. Jean constructed this theater from A to Z. We looked for a real theater, in France, in the Czech Republic. We couldn't find one. Anyway, a real theater would have given us a whole set of problems with setting up, blocking and immobilization. I wanted ample camera movements and I wanted to be comfortable filming. What Jean constructed was in fact a real theater - except the walls could be moved! It was constructed with real materials. It was an incredible place and its destruction broke my heart, like an act of sacrilege.

#### **Why didn't you shoot in France?**

I didn't want to shoot in the greater Paris area because I didn't want to feel like I was going to the office every morning. As soon as you're far from home, there's a much greater sense of involvement and mobilization among the crew. Over four months, that sense of involvement had to be maintained. One reason people work in movies is to experience some unique things and some fantastic moments. We couldn't find what we were looking for in France. We went looking in a number of different countries - Spain, Germany, Bulgaria, Romania. Finally, the country that offered us the best guarantees in terms of cost and quality of technicians with the least amount of distance was the Czech Republic, near Prague. I stayed there for six months and we shot ninety percent of the film. The rest was shot in the streets of Paris.

#### **What made you choose Tom Stern, Clint Eastwood's Director of Photography?**

Not, as I have read, because I could «afford» Clint Eastwood's DP. People think money can buy anything! If Stern didn't feel like it, if this project hadn't interested him, he wouldn't have come. What I was looking for was some real contrasted, sculpted lighting and some truly distinctive choices. I had really liked what Tom did on Mystic River and Million Dollar Baby, those desaturated nuances in Flags of Our Fathers and Letters from Iwo Jima. I didn't think there wasn't much chance he would accept but when I found out he had a house in the region of Gers, I had a little more hope. A Gersois-American couldn't be all bad! I called him and he asked me to send him the script. Twenty-four hours later he called me back to tell me he loved the project and invited me to spend three days at his house to see if we could see eye-to-eye. So I went down to his place. We ate foie gras, drank Armagnac and played fetch with the dog. It turned out we got along just fine.

#### **How would you define your choices as a director? There are some long sequence-length shots, lots of crane movements.**

For this style of story-telling, I liked the feeling of being transported by ample movements, potentially going from the largest to the smallest, like the shot that opens the film, a long sequence-length shot, really hell to shoot, where you start by seeing Paris in wide angle, then move in on the faubourg, then to the Chansonnia, inside the theater, backstage, then moving in on one face. It was a way of telling the little story inside the big story. The goal when filming was to create a feeling of a air - a spectacular dimension, while never losing the humanity. This was done by alternating the sequence-length shots and steadycam to reinforce the feeling of fluidity between characters with still camera shots to underscore the feelings and emotions. Sometimes, with a good actor and good dialog, it's best to be transparent and let the audience concentrate on the dramatic composition, So that they forget that you have tracks and cranes at your disposal. On the other hand, for the musical numbers, especially with dance, we plotted our cut very carefully. The entire sequence of the song «Partir,» for example, was planned measure by measure, shot by shot. In that scene, there are some purely «mechanical» effects - with no DGI, all conceived by Jean Rabasse and his crew. Trees going by, clouds rolling, bicycles on moving sidewalks, make-believe beach, make-believe sea... created the old-fashioned way, as was done with musical comedies at Warner Studios, codified by Busby Berkeley. We escape from the stage into a four-dimensional set, for the duration of one song, returning to the theater in the last few measures.

#### **How did you prepare those scenes with the actors?**

Nora already had experience singing, and was good at it. But I asked Kad, Gérard and Clovis to complete a real training course. It wasn't about making them into real «singers,» but to get as far as we possibly could while keeping their interpretation as appealing and natural as possible. They were very professional about it, submitting to voice and dance classes for several months. That was real proof of their commitment to this film. We recorded all the songs before the shoot and we mainly shot the film in playback, except occasionally, like for «Loin de Paname,» for example, in order to accentuate Douce's fragility. «Partir,» was impossible to sing live

on film, the choreography was too elaborate and there were too many shots in the scene.

#### **Was there one scene that you were particularly nervous about?**

I'm mainly anxious about the scenes that contain a lot of action and that you can't storyboard, like opening night at the Chansonnia. It's nothing spectacular but it is really complicated to direct. They're long scenes which depend on little things, where a lot of different points of view have to be brought together - the show, the actor watching it, backstage, the reactions of the extras in the audience, Clovis who has to react from his seat in the balcony, François Morel in the audience among the others, Nora singing, etc. With that kind of scene, which requires more than three days' shooting, you have to stay very concentrated on how the story unwinds. Paradoxically, a scene like Partir, which is much more difficult to shoot from a technical standpoint, is less of a challenge in terms of concentration because it's all mapped out to the last detail on the storyboard. Then of course there are the sequence-length shots - and there are many in this film - which are hard on the nerves but so satisfying when you pull them off.

#### **You worked here once again with your uncle, Jacques Perrin, with whom you started out. How do you complement one another?**

In our family, we're all immersed d in the wonderful world of movie making, and it's all thanks to him. I got the bug when I was still very young, just by being around him. When I started working at Galatée, his production company, he was mainly producing nature and animal films like Microcosmos, Himalaya, Le Peuple Migrateur [Winged Migration]. I learned a lot, but at the same time I felt that I didn't have the make-up to succeed as a director. When I spoke to him about «Les Choristes», which was not exactly along the lines of what he usually produced, he said, «Why not?» The film's destiny is now well-known. And we were both very surprised! Jacques has a real producer's eye and he reads a screenplay very precisely. «Les Choristes» was not easy to finance - nobody wanted it. But Jacques is a reliable producer. In the end, he doesn't like it when things are too simple. He's a real warrior. Only a battle can interest him. And if they're uphill battles, that's even better. As for Paris 36, when I saw the first estimated budget I thought we'd never get there. There was a lot of convincing to do and, although he was very busy with the directing of his film Oceans, he found the time needed to support this project. Another essential part of the production was Nicolas Mauvernay, who headed up the production inside Galatée and who dedicated all his time and energy, showing real talent to see a project through to fruition. Paris 36 owes him a lot. Then, of course, there were Romain Le Grand and Jérôme Seydoux of Pathé, who also played an essential role.

#### **There are some themes in Paris 36 which were already present in «Les Choristes» - redemption through music, a wounded child, the virtues of friendship and solidarity.**

That's because Paris 36 and «Les Choristes» both resemble me.

#### **How so?**

I think there is some core part of me which is naively optimistic. I never really suspect that people have evil intentions. That's why it always takes me a while to figure out that some are indeed

manipulative and dangerous. I believe in a certain popular wisdom, I feel comfortable with people who don't necessarily come from the same background that I do. I like the notion of individuals helping each other out, paying attention to one another, so-called «left» notions which seem more rewarding than selfishness and success. Those notions seem essential to me. Nowadays more than ever. In addition, I can't help talking about music. My past as a musician nourishes my second life. I believe in the idea that music can save man, help him make a go of it. I know it helped me a lot. It's a little pretentious to call them «themes,» but it's true there are certain steadfast tendencies... I'm not entirely conscious of them while I'm writing or shooting. Only afterward, when everything has taken shape, do I truly become aware of it. I think, «Hey, they're going to say there's another musician who didn't make it, just like Clément Mathieu.» Or «after the abandoned children in «Les Choristes», here's this kid who is snatched away from his father.» I think I get those ideas because, to put it very simply, they touch me. I don't know how to make any other kind of movie than one which resembles me. To me, that is , the only valid definition of a cinéma d'auteur - a film which resembles the person who made it.

#### **What single moment would you retain from the adventure of Paris 36?**

It would be the moment when I learnt that I would finally do this film. Our business is a brutal mixture of moments of joy and confidence on the one hand and moments of profound doubt on the other. At beginning of Spring, 2007, when we were prepping the film in the SFP office in Bry-sur-Marne, the budget for the film had been estimated at almost thirty million euros - I'm rather proud, by the way, that we didn't go over it, inspite of 200 CGI shots and four months of shooting - and I was still waiting for the green light from the production. That night, my crew was leaving and I was all alone in my sort of dusty office, amid the 5000 square feet of office space we'd occupied and which looked nothing like the film's universe. I was a little depressed because I thought that after all those months of work, it could all end right there. Then Nicolas Mauvernay calls me to tell me that Jérôme Seydoux, the head of Pathé, Richard Pezet and Romain Le Grand had given the green light. I remember it was raining. I got in my car and drove around the Bois de Vincennes at ten miles an hour, smoking a cigarette, window open and my elbow out. It was one of those moments when time stops, all is calm, sensations of eternity and happiness fill you all of a sudden and it's like the world is at your feet.







G É R A R D J U G N O T

*Selective Filmography*

**LES BRONZÉS 3 [FRIENDS FOREVER]**

*Patrice Leconte*

**LES BRIGADES DU TIGRE [THE TIGER BRIGADES]**

*Jérôme Cornuau*

**BOUDU**

*Gérard Jugnot*

**LES CHORISTES [THE CHORUS]**

*Christophe Barratier*

**MONSIEUR BATIGNOLE**

*Gérard Jugnot*

**MEILLEUR ESPOIR FEMININ**

**[MOST PROMISING YOUNG ACTRESS]**

*Gérard Jugnot*

**CASQUE BLEU [BLUE HELMET]**

*Gérard Jugnot*

**LES 1001 NUITS [1001 NIGHTS]**

*Philippe de Broca*

**PAPY FAIT DE LA RÉSISTANCE**

*Jean-Marie Poiré*

**DES ENFANTS GÂTÉS [SPOILED CHILDREN]**

*Bertrand Tavernier*

**LE LOCATAIRE [THE TENANT]**

*Roman Polanski*

**LES VALSEUSES [GOING PLACES]**

*Bertrand Blier*







CLOVIS CORNILLAC

*Selective Filmography*

**LE NOUVEAU PROTOCOLE [THE NEW PROTOCOL]**

*Thomas Vincent*

**ASTERIX AUX JEUX OLYMPIQUES  
[ASTERIX AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES]**

*Frédéric Forestier & Thomas Langmann*

**EDEN LOG**

*Franck Vestiel*

**SCORPION**

*Julien Seri*

**LE SERPENT [THE SNAKE]**

*Eric Barbier*

**HAPPY FEET**

*George Miller - Voice*

**LES BRIGADES DU TIGRE [THE TIGER BRIGADES]**

*Jérôme Cornuau*

**LES CHEVALIERS DU CIEL [SKY FIGHTERS]**

*Gérard Pirès*

**UN LONG DIMANCHE DE FIANCAILLES**

**[A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT]**

*Jean-Pierre Jeunet*

**MALABAR PRINCESS**

*Gilles Legrand*



KAD MERAD

*Selective Filmography*

**MES STARS ET MOI**

*Laetitia Colombani*

**BIENVENUE CHEZ LES CH'TIS [WELCOME TO THE STICKS]**

*Dany Boon*

**3 AMIS**

*Michel Boujenah*

**JE CROIS QUE JE L'AIME [COULD THIS BE LOVE?]**

*Pierre Jolivet*

**HAPPY FEET**

*George Miller - Voice*

**ESSAYE-MOI**

*Pierre François Martin-Laval*

**UN TICKET POUR L'ESPACE [A TICKET TO SPACE]**

*Eric Lartigau*

**JE VAIS BIEN NE T'EN FAIS PAS [DON'T WORRY, I'M FINE]**

*Philippe Lioret*

**LES CHORISTES [THE CHORUS]**

*Christophe Barratier*







N O R A A R N E Z E D E R

**F**or the role of Douce, we auditioned actresses who were “sort of” singers, singers who could “sort of” act, some famous, some “sort of” famous and some unknown. Among the hundreds of candidates, one young beginner named Nora Arnezeder, not yet eighteen, passed every test with disconcerting power and instincts. In the singing auditions it was clear we were hearing an excellent vocalist, and the acting auditions were every bit as good. It was clear we were looking at the emergence of a very special talent. It was the same feeling we got with Jean-Baptiste Maunier, who played young Pierre Morhange in «Les Choristes». She was unknown? Not such a bad thing for the role of an unknown... On the set, in addition to her talent, Nora always behaved with the right balance of (necessary) confidence and (indispensable) doubt, just like the character she played. And like Douce, Nora has the stuff to go a very long way.

*Christophe Barratier*



**Your songs were what made Christophe Barratier want to make Paris 36. What got you to write and compose songs inspired by that period?**

**Frank Thomas** - As always, things come about sort of by chance. As it happens, 1936 is the year of my birth. I don't know why really, but I had written a lot of stuff about that time where there was an accordionist. But I didn't have a precise goal in mind. I often write stuff without knowing why or for whom I'm writing. Then one day, I guess it was in 1992 or 1993, a girlfriend of mine introduced me to Reinhardt Wagner, whose name I recognized from film credits. He suggested we write songs together. I gave him one of my pieces - and it wasn't an easy one, I wanted to test him! A few days later, he played the music he had written for me. It was great! I could see right away that he was an excellent melody maker and a real composer.

**Reinhardt Wagner** - Well the piece he wrote was fantastic! In Frank, I had discovered a great author. And I mean author, not just lyricist. Frank doesn't only write a song about this or that. He can make an idea his own, then go beyond it. He's a poet, who creates his own universe. He has the power to find just the right phrase, to let himself get buried in the words. After that first song, he sent me some more and I wrote some more music. We continued like this for a while, until one day I realized that all those songs centering on an accordion player could make a whole. I told him we could make a sort of history of the accordion for television, or something like that. Then Roland Topor, one of our friends, gave us the idea of making a movie, a musical. Frank found the title right away - Faubourg 36.

**Frank Thomas** - We hit on the idea of the chronicle of a Paris neighborhood in 1936. I wrote about ten pages. Then we met Christophe, who worked with Jacques Perrin. At the time, he was working in production, not yet directing films.

**Reinhardt Wagner** - We played and sang the songs for him, and he liked them. He said, «We could make a film out of that.» Frank and Jean-Michel Derenne started writing a screenplay and we started looking for a director. Some were interested but they had other projects they wanted to do first. Others didn't believe in doing a musical at all. It was a hard process and it went on for years. Time went on and we couldn't find anyone to take control of the project. It became the mystery project. Our friends would tease us, saying, «So what's going on with your movie?»

**Frank Thomas** - A little while later, Christophe directed a short called Les Tombales, with Lambert Wilson. Then he made «Les Choristes» and, as everyone knows, it was a hit. When he was looking around for his second film, our film came back up. We talked about it, and we agreed it was a very good idea for him to be «our» director. He's a musician, it's a world he's comfortable with. His desire, and the success of «Les Choristes» now worked to speed this project along

a fast track. He kept the original framework but he completely reinvented the story.

**How many songs did you write for Paris 36?**

**Frank Thomas** - In the end, I must've written almost forty or fifty songs. Many of them, of course, didn't make the final cut. But out of the ten or so songs which are in the film, there must be at least five or six that were among those we originally wrote at the outset, like Le môme Jojo. As for the others, let's hope they can be used one day somewhere else.

**Reinhardt Wagner** - In the beginning, when we pitched the project, I think we had twenty-five and in the end, it's true we only kept five or six of those. For the needs of the screenplay, and certain characters, Christophe asked us to write new ones, like Est-ce que Raymonde est blonde, sung by Kad imitating Fernandel, or the short audition songs. One of the main new songs is Partir pour la mer, which wasn't among the original set. Christophe told me, a little before the shoot, that he needed a song for the ending which would evoke the Popular Front, the first paid vacations, something about people leaving for the seaside. I went home and in the taxi I had started with two notes over «Par-tir.» Then I called Frank and I just told him that we needed to write a song about guys leaving for the seaside and which started off Par-tir. I know how he works, he doesn't need much information. He came over to my house later and picked it up, singing, Leaving, leaving for the sea that you can't see, for the fresh air they have down there...

**Frank Thomas** - There is also Loin de Paname, which was written for another project. It got into the film by chance. One day, when Christophe was looking for more songs, he asked us if we had any others. Reinhardt sang it to him and he loved it. It became one of the recurring themes in the movie.

**How do you usually work together?**

**Frank Thomas** - There's no real hard-and-fast rule. I give him some lyrics and he finds a melody that fits. Sometimes it's the opposite. He gives me a melody line and I find the words. Then we do the rewriting together. We really complement one another, in the end.

**Reinhardt Wagner** - It's a real pleasure to work with him. He's never bothered, for example, when I tell him I think it's a little long or, conversely, that a line is missing a few syllables. I tell him so, and right away in the next few minutes, he finds a solution. And he doesn't need any rhyming dictionaries. Unlike many others, he doesn't write verse and refrain. He writes a song out in two pages, like a story, with strong imagery, like in Enterrée sous le bal: «There are those who dream of Père-Lachaise, a marble stone and gold-leaf letters, and just so it looks better, angels whispering sweet nothings,»

or «And a few handfuls of sawdust will make Big Dipper Stars and below I'll know what band is grinding out the romance.» Lyrics like those have to inspire you. The music comes fairly easily, sometimes I feel like it's already included in the words and you just have to extract it. Maybe that's sort of a poetic vision, but that's how I really see it. Sometimes it's the opposite. I sing, «La, la, la, la...» and the phrase pops into his head. For example, on Attachez-moi, I had found the melody riding the subway. I scribbled it on some staff paper and I always carry it on me. I called Frank and sang the melody to him over the phone. And he goes, «Tie me to the cotton of the candy...» Just like that! We wrote a verse over the phone and we finished it the next day. It's true we complete one another. If you must find a difference, you could say I'm more Cartesian than he. Music contains some mathematics.

**Reinhardt, you have, of course, also scored films before. Did you use the songs as a point of departure?**

**Reinhardt Wagner** - Of course. Although they are two different things and in France they are often confused; Just look at the César awards - they don't have one award for the best song and another for best score like they do at the Oscars. It was an obvious choice, taking off from the songs to create the additional music. I played around with the various themes. That's what Christophe wanted too. That's what he'd done with «Les Choristes», and it's an interesting result. So I could introduce the theme beforehand, before the song was heard. That way, the audience's ears are prepared subconsciously. Or else I use it afterward to underscore the same kind of emotion, impression or feeling. Scoring is very different from writing songs. It's much longer, more laborious work. When you're writing a song, once you have two measures, it's in the bag. For a score, you have to find a main theme. It's a little more complex. At the same time, once you've found it and it works, a big chunk of your work is done. Then there's lots of development, adaptation and orchestration work to do. Speaking of which, For the orchestration, I worked with Hubert Bougis, and he's great. I brought him some sketches, the written score, and then it was up to him to interpret it. We first recorded the songs, before the shoot, so the actors could be freed up for the scenes. The score was recorded afterward, in Prague, with about sixty musicians of the CNSO [Czech National Symphony Orchestra]. The fact that Christophe is a musician and has such a love for music makes the dialog that much richer. In the end, this project was done at the right time and with the right people!

**What single moment would you retain from this whole adventure?**

**Frank Thomas** - The shoot in Prague, the night scene in the snow in that incredible decor. There were so many people on the set, and the actors doing the scene over twenty times... And every time it was magical.

**Reinhardt Wagner** - Well first of all, the scenes I was in, because Christophe asked me to play Blaise, the pianist who accompanies Nora when she sings, and who is in the orchestra which is being directed by Pierre Richard. It's fun, and it's impressive. I saw Christophe and his crew and his actors all working. I was also surprised by... the number of sausages which were on the control table. And I'm going to snitch here, Gérard Jugnot was the one who ate the most of them - and he was hiding it. But I think the moment I'll most remember was when we signed the contract, once Christophe had decided to make Paris 36. We had been waiting for this film for so long. We thought, «This is it, we're doing it.»





## TOM STERN

*Director of Photography*

I first met Christophe at the end of 2006. He called our home in Los Angeles and spoke to my wife, Françoise Combadière Stern and asked if he might come to LA and meet me. Françoise told him that would be impossible as I was resting at our other home in the Gers. He contacted me there and came down for 2 days and we got to know each other and he gave me the story and the music of Faubourg 36. He was interested in meeting me because he was impressed by *Mystic River*, he felt it had a rare combination of beauty and realism.

I was taken by Christophe's love for all the characters in his film and by the depth of emotion. Also, for a cinematographer, the opportunity to do a project in this period and with someone like Jean Rabasse is like a Christmas gift. From the outset Christophe was clear that we all had a heavy responsibility to portray this period creatively as there were no films in color of this time. We spent 3 months together in preparation. We used the Panavision «C» series anamorphics lenses that I used with Clint Eastwood and others. They are in some respects «retro» but internally they have been refined to a remarkable degree giving one the possibility of very fine detail. They have certain limitations (speed, close focus) but if you can deal with them they are great.

For me the heaviest responsibility was to keep a balance between a realistic film about human characters and not slip into a musical. Christophe and I were constantly in discussions about this. I think, finally, we have succeeded.

The entire project was for me a very happy time. Cinema is well known to be international in terms of spectators but it also can be international in terms of creation. Being trusted such a creative group was like opening the windows of my mind and getting a lot of fresh air.

In my experience each and every director is different but my job remains the same, to try to the best of my ability to understand their vision and to apply my experience and talent to help realise that vision. With Christophe it was a job that is hard to call «work» as it was for me a wonderful experience.





**How did Christophe Barratier first come to you with Paris 36?**

I was in Las Vegas where I was working on Love, the Cirque du Soleil's homage to the Beatles, when Christophe called me. As soon as I got back, I met with him. He told me about his film and we very quickly got to talking about the great classic French films of 30s and 40s, sets which, for him, shouldn't be just reconstitutions, but interpretations. He had a precise vision and an interesting analysis about what he wanted. I was thrilled that Christophe chose me for good reasons - he was very clear about his motives. He's very sensitive to the information that a set can provide for the breakdown of his characters. For him, the set is really important and, at the same time, it has to serve the story and the theme. Of course, we spoke about Alexandre Trauner, the great set designers of the 30s and 40s, but also about photographers like Brassai, Izis, Doisneau. He wanted to bring in some of their truth and their humanity. Then, as our discussions went on, we started evoking more contemporary references. We watched a few films together - for example, Sam Mendes' Road to Perdition, which we analyzed practically image by image, because there are some incredible things in that movie.

**How do you start when you begin working on a film like Paris 36?**

I do an enormous amount of research. I always work with the same researcher on dozens and dozens of books and photographs - and also drawings, in this case Tardi's drawings, of course. Thousands of images go into it in the end. I need to start with this kind of research to get a handle on the terrain, then, when I've really got it, I just forget all about it and I work freely, from within. I also watch good films, even some that have nothing to do with the kind of film I'm working on. It's always very instructive. The intelligence of others frees me of my little apprehensions. Set designers always run into the same difficulties. The same questions keep coming back - What's the scale of the film? Is it a big budget or a small budget? Will it be shot in the studio or on location? There is always a little uncertainty at first. But with Christophe, Jacques Perrin and Nicolas Mauvernay, the conversation is always very clear and very constructive. Jacques is one of the few producers who will call me on a weekend to tell me that he's seen the rushes and that he was moved by what he saw. These are not people who just talk about the money!

**One of the key pieces in the set is the Chansonnia. Everyone says it's a theater that's truer than life.**

I've always thought that we should construct the theater in the studio, but I didn't want to impose it. We started by scouting in Paris. In the period the movie is set in, theatres were all over the city. Now they've been replaced by movie houses, parking lots and shopping malls! The size we wanted for our theater was a little ticklish. It had to be big enough, obviously, for technical requirements inherent to the shooting, but at the same time it couldn't be too big, it was supposed to be a small neighborhood music hall. We had to find the subtle coherence in all of that. Very quickly, we figured out that we



wouldn't find the one we were looking for and we decided to build practically everything in the studio. We took the Théâtre de l'Atelier as our model, enlarging the stage block - and we were also inspired by other theaters. For me, it was important that the place have a soul, that it feel real, in its backstage areas, stage manager's post, dressing rooms. The actors had to feel like they were in a real theater. It was a lot of fun seeing Gérard, Kad or Clovis, who know the theater really well, walking around inside the set and finding so many realistic details.

**How do you prepare a construction site like that?**

We toured around various studios in Europe - Germany, Bulgaria... It took four months to finally decide to build it all in Prague. I had worked there for a month ahead of time, working out the budget in order to provide information to the contending studios. We started drawing it up a few months later - we worked very hard on the model as well. I also work a lot with my head painter, Alain Frentzel. For me, it's very important to work on the colour. Sometimes we spend hours looking at chromatic harmonies together. Unfortunately,

right after delivering the construction plans, when our start date was six weeks away, we had to scrap it and start all over again from scratch because our budget had been cut 25%. It was a pretty tricky moment, very stressful, but there was such a good osmosis between us, Christophe and the production, that it all worked out for the best. When work started, I was doing the prep in Paris but my assistant was in Prague and he stayed there for seven months. Two other big productions - Narnia and Babylone A.D. were shooting practically at the same time and so we couldn't get access to the Barrandov Studios. So for the construction we were working with crews that we didn't know and who came from other studios. It was a little tense. But we adapted a little, and we got through it. It was three and a half months in the building. A total of 400 people worked on it. The set was 450 feet long and Pigoil's building was seventy feet high. The theater alone was 150 feet long, from the exterior to the backstage. It wasn't very high, however, only 24 feet. Besides the theater and the faubourg, we built Pigoil's and Douce's apartments, Monsieur Radio's house, Dorfeuil and Galapiat's offices, among other things. The factory scenes, however, were shot on location.

**What kind of collaboration did you have with Tom Stern, the Director of Photography?**

I loved working with him. I asked to meet with him as quickly as possible. He was very present and we had a lot of discussions. Tom is very precise and demanding, and he brings that to a set. Every set was reviewed, tested for lighting, color and brightness. We really worked together. I really enjoyed our collaboration and I appreciate the humility that Americans have in the workplace. I had already noticed that when working with the Cirque du Soleil. We really told each other the things that needed to get said, with no taboos. You get to the essentials in a direct and pragmatic manner.

**What image would you retain from this whole adventure?**

I have one specific photograph in mind - the decor at night, in the rain, in the middle of the countryside. It was really a magical vision.





## JACQUES PERRIN

Producer

The beginning of the story of the film Paris 36 goes back a few years. At that time, Reinhardt Wagner and Frank Thomas had written and composed some songs on a theme centering on the Popular Front period.

Their intention, without really affirming it, was to make a musical comedy for the theater.

Jean-Michel Derenne suggested to them the idea of adapting it for a film. The heart of the work seemed to be well drawn, there were a number of songs already written. All that remained was to write the book, that is to say, the skeleton for the whole. Simple to say, very difficult to actually carry out. As we would soon find out, it proved to be practically insurmountable.

Christophe played some demos for me, with Reinhardt Wagner on the piano and singing songs for Douce and for Jojo. After listening to them, I remember I wanted to listen to them again straight away. And that evening, I did again. Then the next day, again.

Christophe then suggested that I meet Frank and Reinhardt. This time, the show took place right before my eyes. Reinhardt was at the piano, playing a new «crazy singer,» while Frank delighted in repeating the lyrics he had written mezzo voce.

Afterward, like in the film, when Milou runs out into the street after leaving Douce's room, I wanted to run behind those songs... a refrain, a melody, and the feeling of joy that carries you away.

Frank and Reinhardt told me about how they had worked together on the songs. I assumed they had been the fruit of a lot of meetings, reflection and hard work, both together and separately, and that lots of sketches had been done before finishing a score and a text.

Nothing like that. When one has the beginnings of a tune in his head, the other a piece of a phrase on the tip of his tongue, they get together and the tune takes flight, the phrase takes on meaning and its poetic dimension in all of a few moments. And that's how it went for all the songs in the film.

But at that time, there was another kind of problem. What was going to be the story of the screenplay? What story could possibly bring together all these songs? In the several attempts at screen adaptation which followed, the structure and the fictional framework took on too much importance and made it difficult to work on the songs, which each had their own integrity.

I made a few proposals and suggestions. They were probably unconvincing, but at least they expressed how fond Christophe and I were

of this project. Years went by. Frank and Reinhardt didn't understand that reflection about a story can take years at Galatée.

Christophe worked on *La Cage aux rossignols* [A Cage of Nightingales], and directed «Les Choristes».

The time had come for him to think about Paris 36 again, but this time the choice of director and writer would be simple. It would be him.

From time to time I've heard people say about Christophe, «It's going to be hard for him to do something as good as «Les Choristes».» I didn't care whether the «as good as» referred to the quality of the film or to its success. It doesn't matter, that consideration is unimportant. You don't try to do better, you try to do well and that's plenty. For Christophe, that question was not an existential preoccupation. He got offers from every corner, even from across the Atlantic. He hadn't forgotten «le môme Jojo,» Douce and their songs. He even found them some companions, with names like Pigoil, Milou, Jacky Jacquet, Monsieur Radio, Galapiat. Then he brought them to life in this Paris of 1936. He figured out a common plot line, some points where the characters would cross paths. In short, he mapped out a real story which, not necessarily accompanied by the words and music, had its own dimension.

The story was beautiful, touching, funny and tragic. He found the dramaturgical key that we had been seeking for years. Christophe had Reinhardt and Frank write new songs. The joy was there again. Enthusiasm is a contagious disease. Gérard Jugnot, Kad Merad, Clovis Cornillac, Pierre Richard, Bernard-Pierre Donnadiou caught the bug very quickly. Then it became an epidemic. Tom Stern, Jean Rabasse, Yves Deschamps, François Hamel, Daniel Sobrino all fell prey to it.

We had to find our Douce, whose characteristics were simple - she had to be young, beautiful, a good singer and a good actress! It was simple because Christophe found her. But it's true there were quite a few auditions. Pépinot took on the features of Jojo. We had to put an accordion in his hands so he could run his fingers up and down its scales. He practiced for months.

All we needed was to finance the film. Our partner from «Les Choristes», Pathé, wasn't difficult to convince. The screenplay, the songs, our good relationships... Yes, we would continue to work together. France 2, France 3 and Canal+ also expressed their affection for the project and for Galatée.

The story of the production of this film is a beautiful story, too.





## NICOLAS MAUVERNAY

*Producer*

**A**fter «Les Choristes», Christophe took on a new challenge. He wanted to write an original story by himself, based on the handful of songs written by Reinhardt Wagner and Frank Thomas about Paris in the 1930s.

From the first sketches for the screenplay, it was clear that such a film would require some hefty production values. A world which has now disappeared, the working class Paris of 1936, all had to be recreated from scratch. In spite of the pitfalls of a second big budget film, the strength of the story immediately made us want to help Christophe flesh out what he imagined and transport us to the backstage of a music hall where passions crystallize.

More than the success of «Les Choristes», it was Christophe's artistic ambition and enthusiasm for the film, as well as that of the principle actors which helped us share the weight of the production with our usual partners - Pathé, Canal+, France 2, France 3 and Constantin Film. Like us, they wanted to give Christophe the necessary means to dramatize the life of a neighborhood and a time which, strangely, has not often been dramatised on screen.

The dream progressively became reality, thanks to the commitment and talent of participants like Jean Rabasse, Tom Stern, Daniel Sobrino, François Hamel, etc... and let us not forget that wonderful family of actors made up of known and unknown faces. A good sense of solidarity and a spirit of comradeship which is found in the film allowed us to experience the nine months of prep and the four-month shoot with shared energy and focus. Just like the heroes of Paris 36, we wanted to put on a show and recreate a universe as an homage to a period which has put a distinct stamp on the collective imagination.

How to thank all the Czech crew members who, right off the bat, shared the enthusiasm of these curious Frenchmen who had come to build a forgotten Paris?

How to describe a square and a street where even the pigeons seemed to have lived for years? What can you say about a truer-than-life



music hall set where some people wanted to produce real shows?

How can you think about those sets which only existed for the length of the shoot and the only trace of which is to be found on film, without nostalgia?

How can you forget the crew humming the songs from the film between takes?

And those shooting days when even the actors who weren't in the scenes wanted to be on set?

In spite of the size of the project, we always made sure we went through this adventure in the spirit of a theatrical company. All of us - actors, crew members, authors and partners - wound up soaking up the very matter of the film. A very rare alchemy brought us all together in pursuing the film's artistic goals and bringing life to a vision, Christophe's vision.

If people are touched by the film, it will be thanks in large part to his shared passion in a unique cinematic enterprise.



## C A S T

Pigoil	<b>Gérard JUGNOT</b>
Milou	<b>Clovis CORNILLAC</b>
Jacky	<b>Kad MERAD</b>
Douce	<b>Nora ARNEZEDER</b>
Monsieur TSF	<b>Pierre RICHARD</b>
Galapiat	<b>Bernard-Pierre DONNADIEU</b>
Jojo	<b>Maxence PERRIN</b>
Célestin	<b>François MOREL</b>
Viviane	<b>Elisabeth VITALI</b>
Lebeauupin	<b>Christophe KOUROTCHKINE</b>
Grevoul	<b>Eric NAGGAR</b>
Detective Tortil	<b>Eric PRAT</b>
Mondain	<b>Julien COURBEY</b>
Triquet	<b>Philippe DU JANERAND</b>
Quai des Orfèvres Detective	<b>Marc CITTI</b>
Dubrulle	<b>Christian BOUILLETTE</b>
Crouzet	<b>Thierry NENEZ</b>
Clément	<b>Frédéric PAPALIA</b>
Social Services Inspector	<b>Stéphane DEBAC</b>
Dorfeuil	<b>Jean LESCOT</b>
Borchard	<b>Daniel BENOIN</b>
Jeannot	<b>Wilfred BENAICHE</b>
Blaise	<b>Reinhardt WAGNER</b>

## C R E W

Screenplay **Christophe BARRATIER**  
Adapted and with dialog by **Christophe BARRATIER - Julien RAPPENEAU**  
Based on an original idea by **Frank THOMAS - Jean-Michel DERENNE - Reinhardt WAGNER**  
Original Score **Reinhardt WAGNER**  
Song lyrics **Frank THOMAS**  
Cinematography **Tom STERN**  
Sets **Jean RABASSE**  
Costumes **Carine SARFATI**  
Sound **Daniel SOBRINO - Roman DYMNY - Vincent GOUJON**  
1st Assistant Director **Valérie OTHNIN-GIRARD**  
Continuity Supervisor **Françoise THOUVENOT**  
Choreography **Corinne DEVAUX**  
Editor **Yves DESCHAMPS**  
Production Manager **François HAMEL**  
Produced by **Jacques PERRIN - Nicolas MAUVERNAY**  
Co-Producer **Romain LE GRAND**  
Associate Producers **Christophe BARRATIER - Martin MOSZKOWICZ - Christian BENOIST**  
A Franco-German-Czech coproduction **GALATEE FILMS - PATHE PRODUCTION**  
**CONSTANTIN FILM - FRANCE 2 CINEMA - FRANCE 3 CINEMA**  
**LOGLINE STUDIOS - NOVO ARTURO FILMS - BLUE SCREEN PRODUCTIONS**  
With the participation of **CANAL+** and of **TPS STAR**  
In association with **BANQUE POPULAIRE IMAGES 8**  
With the support of **EURIMAGES**, of the **CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA CINEMATOGRAPHIE**,  
of **PROCIREP** and the **MEDIA** program of the European Union





## SOUNDTRACK

Lyrics: **Frank Thomas**

Music: **Reinhardt Wagner**

Editions: **Galène Editions / Frank Thomas / Reinhardt Wagner**

Sung by:

**Sous le balcon de Maria**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Gilles Sanjuan

**Loin de Paname**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Nora Arnezeder

**Un recommencement**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Nora Arnezeder

**Il y a**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Kad Merad

**Les Dingues**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Clovis Cornillac, Kad Merad

**Attachez-moi**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Nora Arnezeder

**Enterrée sous le bal**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Nora Arnezeder

**Partir pour la mer**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Nora Arnezeder, Clovis Cornillac,  
Gérard Jugnot, Kad Merad

**Le Môme Jojo**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Clovis Cornillac, Gérard Jugnot, Kad Merad  
and Frédéric Papalia

**Y'aura jamais d'accordéon**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
François Morel

**Les Flageolets**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
François Jérosme

**Est-ce que Raymonde est blonde ?**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Kad Merad

**Aime-moi**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Manuela Gourary

**Une guitare une femme et mon île**  
(F.Thomas - R. Wagner)  
Philippe Scagni

*Original soundtrack  
available at Universal*



*Press pack and rights-free photos at [www.faubourg36-lefilm.com](http://www.faubourg36-lefilm.com)*

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*Logline Studios - Novo Arturo Films - Blue Screen Productions*

*Text on the first page written by Pierre Philippe*





**PATHE!**