

WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS  
présente

**JEAN-PIERRE MARIELLE  
VALERIA BRUNI-TEDESCHI  
SABINE AZEMA  
BULLE OGIER  
BAKARY SANGARÉ  
ARIÉ ELMALEH**

# Faut que ça DANSE!

**UN FILM DE NOÉMIE LVOVSKY**

SCÉNARIO ADAPTÉ ET RÉVISÉ PAR NOÉMIE LVOVSKY, FLORENCE SEYVOS. MONTÉ PAR JEAN-MARC FROHE (MID). MONTÉE SONORE EMMAUELLE CASTRO. MUSIQUE ARCHIE SHEPP. COSTUME DESIGNER BRIGITTE DILLANKER SYDARI MALDRANT. COIFFEURS MICKAS MUREAU EMANUEL CHESET. RÉALISÉ PAR NOÉMIE LVOVSKY. COSTUME DESIGNER DOROTHÉE GORRAUD. MONTÉE SONORE ANAIS VAUGELADE. COIFFEURS MONTÉE SONORE WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS UGC IMAGES FRANCE 2 CINÉMA VEGA FILM TÉLÉVISION SUISSE ROMANDE. AVEC LA PARTICIPATION DE TPS STAR AVEC LE SOUTIEN DE EURIMAGE 3 DE LA RÉGION ÎLE-DE-FRANCE ET DU CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA CINÉMATOGRAPHIE. EN ASSOCIATION AVEC LES SOCIÉTÉS SOFICINÉMA 3 ET UGC 3. DISTRIBUTION UGC DISTRIBUTION. LOGO UGC VOD. VISITEZ WWW.MOVIESALES.UGC.COM

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Why Not Productions presents

# LET'S DANCE!

a film by  
**Noémie Lvovsky**

starring

**Jean-Pierre Marielle**  
**Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi**  
**Sabine Azema**  
**Bulle Ogier**  
**Bakary Sangaré**  
**Arié Elmaleh**

Screenplay

**Noémie Lvovsky and Florence Seyvos**

**A Why Not Productions - UGC Images - France 2 Cinema - Vega Film -  
Swiss French Television French-Swiss coproduction**

Running-time: 100 minutes

## SYNOPSIS

In the Bellinsky family: there's Salomon, the father, brimming with life but whom the world would like to bury all too quickly; Geneviève, the mother, who gradually lets herself slip into sheer madness; and Sarah, their daughter, caught between her separated parents, who patiently tries to build her life with her fiancé, François.

Salomon, nearly 80 years old, tries at all cost to enjoy every single instant. Fleeing his past, the war, the dead, his exterminated relatives, he throws himself body and soul into the quest for one or more "companions" to ease his old days, takes tap-dancing classes under the direction of Fred Astaire, and categorically refuses to incarnate the traditional clichés of old age imposed by our society. It's at this moment in his life that he meets Violet.

For her part, Geneviève dreams of but one thing: peacefully continuing to be being treated like a child by her home helper, defender and guardian angel, Mr Mootosamy. She's gradually decided that the constraints of reality weighed down too heavily on her shoulders, and, takes mischievous delight in doing solely whatever comes into her head, that is to say, very little indeed. Unfortunately, finances are at rock bottom, and at Mr Mootosamy's, Geneviève is compelled to emerge from her torpor and act.

Finally, for Sarah, life is complicated. She struggles to find the right place between her father, whom she worships but who annoys her to exasperation, and her mother, whom she no longer understands. Even when she thinks she's at last found some form of stability with François, Sarah all at once discovers to her great bewilderment that she's pregnant, despite the fact she's been pronounced sterile by her doctors.

Taken by surprise, Sarah is now summoned in turn to build a family.

## INTERVIEW WITH NOÉMIE LVOVSKY AND FLORENCE SEYVOS

- What was the initial idea for the film?

**Noémie Lvovsky** - The desire to tell the story of someone who begins to turn old without realising it, how he gradually becomes aware of it through the eyes of others, and finally how the world at large seems to want to "show him the door". The character of Salomon thus appeared as a man about 75-80 years old, Russian, a Jew, a survivor... So as not to be buried alive, he decides to find a new love.

Florence often used to ask me: "Are you sure Salomon's the central figure, and not his daughter?" All the difficulty lay there: how to tell the tale of an elderly man without having personally experienced old age oneself? So we decided that the central character would still be Salomon, but told from the point of view of his daughter. We thought of Sarah talking about her father in voice-over, and, as of there, everything just fell into place.

- The film also tells a story of a family. How did you construct the script?

**Florence Seyvos** - It's a story of a family with things that are both somewhat sad and somewhat fantastic. I remember a long scene which Noémie had written, that's a bit changed in the final picture, but which seems to me to have been its very cornerstone. It's a scene in which Salomon tells his daughter that he has to find a place to "spend the winter", and Sarah immediately becomes angry as she can't bear the idea that he might disappear. And then, she tells him that if they must find a grave, it's not only for him but all the rest of the family as well.

**Noémie Lvovsky** - Because society makes him feel that he is soon going to die, Salomon is compelled to raise the question of where he will be buried. This questioning brings him back into past, which he hates thinking about, and about which he refuses to even speak. All the members of his family died at Auschwitz, or as he says, "they went up in smoke". So, there's no family vault, no grave, no inscription of either names or dates.

During the writing of the screenplay, the Wall of Names was inaugurated in Paris. It was the very first time that in France there's been a place where the names were inscribed. We integrated this monument into Salomon's present. It marks the beginning of peace and acceptance of his past.

Salomon changes over the course of the film: at the outset, he thinks himself and wants to be immortal. But in the end, he comes to realise that he's mortal, and that's not such a bad piece of news. To return to the question, we wanted to speak of both the close bonds which unite this family, and to what point each lives out, in his or her own way, a period of great revolution.

**- In a film which tells the story of a family, we say to ourselves that often autobiography lies not far off. Is this the case?**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - When Florence and I write, we're inspired by a reality which we intimately recognise. There's the reality of our emotions, our feelings, that of certain events, certain situations, and that of the people whom we love, who interest us, and who are close us. We're equally inspired by those books and films which live on in us. When we begin writing, we quickly break away from our sources of inspiration. We prefer fiction, as we have the feeling that it better relates reality. What's funny is that once the work has been completed, you realise that autobiography is never there where you think it is, no more than fiction...

**- The film speaks about very serious things but always with humour and lightness. Did the tone of the picture come naturally or in a controlled way?**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - We weren't aware we were writing a comedy, but we did know that we didn't want to make a drama. For example, we were incapable making a character die. It was Salomon, without our actually realising it, who guided us, with his experience in tragedy and his taste for comedy. We watched Billy Wilder's movies and found in them the very rhythm, lightness and humour that Salomon so loves. We chose his last name in tribute to Lubitsch. Bellinsky is the name of Charles Boyer, as the loving, impertinent, and stateless star of CLUNY BROWN.

**- LET'S DANCE! is the fourth film you've written together. How would you define your respective roles in scripting?**

**Florence Seyvos-Noémie** always brings the theme and most of the characters. Next, we speak for hours and hours until we come up with situations which get across what we want to say. Then, we either write together at the same table, or each on his own.

**Noémie Lvovsky** - Like every time, I find many Florence's in the film: saying the least to say the most, slipping in witty things here and there, funny without seeming to be...

**Florence Seyvos** - I'd say that Noémie is more pugnacious than me. She also has a genuine sense of comedy which allows her to go very far.

- **At what moment did you think of the actors who were to play these characters?**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - I think about actors only after scripting. At the time of the screenplay, we work a lot on a character, but when I offer the part to an actor, it's not because he resembles the character, rather because I want the character to resemble him. In point of fact it's an encounter midway between character and actor.

- **Why did you think of Jean-Pierre Marielle for Salomon's role?**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - I love his presence, his voice, his craziness, his strength, his beauty. We had a difficult relationship and I've got the feeling I understand why: I weave perhaps very close ties with actors, I like seeing them a lot, getting acquainted, doing scores of readings, rehearsals... But with Marielle, we didn't work like that. He's both very attentive to his partners and very solitary. I realise today that his way of working for this movie resembles Salomon's character: one of resistance. Marielle resisted being spoken to about the character, reading about him, hearing everything about him being repeated... Salomon resists the world and thinking about death, the past, the war...

**Florence Seyvos** - And nevertheless, even alone, he built for himself a character of Salomon who seemed definitively very close to the one we'd imagined. I didn't drop by very often at the shoot, but I do have memories of him with that air of his of being both there and not there. He always seemed to be daydreaming and concentrating at the same time.

**Noémie Lvovsky** - Yes, he was in that state of concentrated musing of his. He often speaks about the imagination of actors. For him it's a key tool.

Talking too much with the director, over reflecting on the character, and not analysing was for him a way of protecting his imagination.

He interprets situations which otherwise would have made Salomon appear ridiculous or pathetic (as, for example, when he asks a young female student for her phone number) with unsurpassed joy devoid of cynicism.

Many actors came to the shoot for just one day. Marielle acted opposite each of them as if he were the central figure of the film. He loves and admires each and every one of his partners. And left a lot of room for actors who had to do what we call "bit parts": Daniel Emilfork, Nicolas Maury, who plays the banker, or Judith Chemla, who plays the student.

**- What about Bulle Ogier who plays Geneviève, the mother who always seems a little elsewhere?**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - Having read the screenplay, she put her finger on a key question: "Does Geneviève suffer from mental illness?". I asked her to above all not act like she's crazy, and she immediately understood. She needed me to free her of this question, and she was clearly right because Geneviève's madness is an issue for doctors, not me or her to decide on.

Like Salomon, Geneviève is resistant, in her own way. Florence says about this family: "The family? I do as I see fit!" Geneviève always take a little step aside to face reality. Bulle shares with her her arrogance, her sheerness, and a certain stubbornness...

**Florence Seyvos** - When she says to her daughter: "I said that I love you", that might seem strange or a little bit crazy, yet it expresses with great precision exactly what she feels.

**- For the role of Sarah, their daughter, you called upon Valeria Bruni - Tedeschi, with whom you've worked already quite often. Do you consider her your alter ego?**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - I've worked off and on with Valeria for some twenty years now, and she's a very close friend. Which is good, as she's equally one of my favourite actresses. She accompanies me beyond her work as actress.

**Florence Seyvos** - Sarah's character is undoubtedly the one the least well-defined in the screenplay, both with respect to situations she goes through, and her ties with her parents. But Valeria has such intense presence, she experiences things with such passion, that one need only imagine her for thirty seconds in the role to no longer ask any more questions.

**- In the picture, Sarah is certainly the character closest to you. Didn't you want to play her yourself?**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - When I'm watching a film and I see an actor playing in his own film (Xavier Beauvois, Yvan Attal or Valeria), it still seems to me to contribute something vital to the movie. But when I'm a director, I don't like filming myself.

**- The film makes of numerous veiled references to movies such as THE GODFATHER, THE FLY II, IN THE SOUP...**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - The cinema is a constant source of inspiration. It's part not only of my life, but equally of that of the characters. IN THE SOUP is a simple nod to Why Not Productions. As for FLY II, it's because what Sarah has in mind at that precise moment truly resembles a horror film!

And for THE GODFATHER, Coppola is one of my all-time favourite film directors in the world and we grinned along with Florence at mentioning this film, while we were trying our hand in turn at telling the story of a family. There's equally TOP HAT, American musicals, Fred Astaire, tap-dancing, and all of Salomon's love of the pictures of those years...

**- We find this cinematic dimension through the dreams of Salomon and Sarah and which play a very important part in the movie...**

**Noémie Lvovsky:** One of his dreams, the cartoon, depicts the very strong ties which unite daughter and father. Sarah inherits a nightmare from Salomon. What he didn't tell her was the way he lived the war, Sarah despite everything, inherits this,. But this inheritance of the unspoken can only develop in her subconscious, fantasies and nightmares. It has no place anywhere else.

Salomon is plagued by guilt at not having been able to actually fight. So he invents, and boasts to his daughter how he killed Hitler. She enters her father's imagination and sees the murder. He becomes for her the hero that he couldn't be during the war.

Beyond meaning, there's equally the pure pleasure of direction, making the film, imagining Hitler's bedroom, asking an actor to play a puppet Hitler...

**- Concerning the bond which unites Salomon and Sarah, the two characters find themselves at the time in an virtually symmetrical situation: the father who refuses to envisage nearing death, and the**



**daughter who opposes with a very clear denial her own pregnancy which she's just been informed of...**

**Noémie Lvovsky:** We didn't reflect on it per se when writing, but it turns out that father and daughter live out something particular to their generations. The survivors escaped death, while the children of survivors weren't supposed to have been born. The agenda was to not only murder the undesirables, but equally any of their descendants. What I want to say is that, for the children of survivors, the mere fact of having been born is far from obvious. Sarah is so concerned by her own birth that she's nearly unable to think of giving birth herself. At least, at the outset, because later, fortunately, everything changes...

**Florence Seyvos** - There's as well the fact as a doctor had told her that she could not become pregnant, so Sarah simply had got used to the idea. And in a way, there was something reassuring in the notion of remaining the daughter of one's parents forever and stop the very arrow of life. So the news that she's pregnant suddenly snaps her away from her usual reality.

**Noémie Lvovsky** - Learning that you're expecting a baby equally represents a duty to accept that one's parents are made to die, and that the children will survive us. After a moment of refusal, Sarah frees herself and finds her way again.

**Florence Seyvos** - For me, the heart of the film lies there, in the fear then the acceptance of the cycle of life. And the family represents the living theatre of this cycle, for some will leave and others will appear in their place. It seems to me that there's one pivotal scene in the picture, when Salomon is in bed with Violet and they say each other: since we're not going to buy a country house or have children, we'll be buried together. The film can then end with Sarah's maternity and the birth of her daughter.

**- The character of Violet, played by Sabine Azema, is not part of this family, but her role is essential to Salomon finding his way. How did her character come to be?**

**Florence Seyvos** - Violet appeared at first as somewhat of a loner. I vaguely had in mind a woman I know and who has in common with Violet that she has no children, lives alone, has many affairs and has always led an independent life. With equally that capacity to look in wonder at the little things of life.

**Noémie Lvovsky** - I saw Violet as both an extremely chaste and highly playful woman. Sabine was perfect to play her. We've never worked together before, but for years I've kept the most wonderful image of her in a scene in Alain Resnais' *MÉLO*. She's at the foot of the bed of a man she loves and who is very sick. She says to him: "What do you want me to do for you? A somersault? Hop, a somersault!", she makes a forwards somersault, and again "hop, a somersault", and she makes a backwards somersault. This scene alone made me fall in love with her, and has given me the desire, for years now, to work with her. These somersaults resemble her: above all don't dwell on serious matters, and play instead. She's the most playful actress I know.

- **The film is full of finds which precisely belong to this register, notably the brilliant idea of having Salomon gamble away his pension as deportation orphan, at the casino.**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - In many people I know, this "deportation orphan's pension" truly represents impossible money. Impossible to refuse, impossible to accept. And sometimes even impossible to name. Then we imagined Salomon blowing his entire fortune at the casino. It's also a way for him to give shape to the good and ill fortunes of his life. A shape somewhat derisory, but a shape all the same...

- **There are two other characters in the film who are more or less the witnesses engaged by this family: François, Sarah's companion played by Arié Elmaleh and Mr Mootosamy, played by Bakary Sangaré, who's in charge of taking care of the mother, Geneviève.**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - I had already made a film with Arié Elmaleh: *SCHOOL FOR ALL*, by Eric Rochant. We became good friends. And I found in her the same gentleness, amused indulgence and discreet irony as I did in François.

I loved Bakary Sangaré as Jonas in Arnaud Desplechin's *"IN THE COMPANY OF MEN"*, and I've watched him in the theatre for 15 years now. He amazes me each and every time. He had a small part in *FEELINGS*. He comes from afar, from an African village, and I'm delighted to see come true, each and every day of our work, Jean Renoir's now famous words: "There are more points in common between myself and an Indian from the confines of India who loves the cinema, than between myself and my next-door neighbour."

Geographically, socially and culturally, Bakary and I are the very opposite, yet in our work, we are very close, we understand each other in the wink of

an eye without the need of the least verbal explanation, which is a great surprise and a true joy.

The character of Mr Mootoosamy came at the same time as that of Geneviève. Because she isn't capable of taking care of herself, someone beside her, who understands her perfectly, follows her and accepts without fear her madness. I believe that he is saved by his faith. At one moment Sarah, in voice-over, says about him: "He is deeply religious as he's both a Hinduist-Tamoul, animist and Christian." That carries him along and structures him, unlike Geneviève who is not religious... She believes so little in her own existence as is.

**- When you see the film today, do you still find the idea you first had of it at the beginning of scripting?**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - Yes, I believe so, even if I don't yet have the hindsight, even if I'm incapable of being the spectator of my own film, and even if the film greatly evolved in the editing room.

The order of the scenes is in no way the same as in the screenplay. The opening scene, for example, was the originally written as the final scene. The character of Sarah was more in the sidelines, but Emmanuelle Castro, the film's editor, was really able to bring her out. More than all the other films I've made, this one found its structure on the editing table. In point of fact, Emmanuelle Castro made just as much of a contribution as co-author as film editor, for the work of writing continues until the movie at long last is completed and in the can.

**- The film's title, LET'S DANCE!, is echoed not only in the rhythm and tone of the picture, but equally in its music, by Archie Shepp. How did your collaboration with him take place?**

**Noémie Lvovsky** - I felt it necessary to call upon a real jazzman as jazz is Salomon's music. It was Brigitte Sy, a friend, fellow director and actress, who presented Archie Shepp to me. He works in a very unusual manner in his film acting which is highly flexible, free and spontaneous. For example, he arrives at the studio and begins composing, or decides that such and such a sequence will not be written but improvised. I was impressed and immediately fell under his charm, as I watched him searching and suggesting, as well as listening to him play and sing. He's truly a living legend.

- Salomon is a fan of Fred Astaire whose films he watches over and over again, and who he even tries to imitate by taking dancing lessons. Is Fred Astaire for you the absolute model?

Noémie Lvovsky - For me, no, but for Salomon yes. Fred Astaire is the epitome of grace, lightness, elegance, not to mention a suave smile no matter what happens, a kind of sheer perfection, an ideal.

## **NOEMIE LVOVSKY**

### **SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY**

#### **DIRECTOR AND SCREENWRITER**

2007 LET'S DANCE!

2003 FEELINGS

1999 I'M NOT AFRAID OF LIFE (aka LIFE DOESN'T SCARE ME)

1997 LES ANNÉES LYCÉE: PETITES (TV)

1994 FORGET ME

#### **SCREENWRITER**

2007 ACTRESSES by Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi

2003 IT'S EASIER FOR A CAMEL... by Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi

1996 CLUBBED TO DEATH (LOLA) by Yolande Zauberman

1995 THE PHANTOM HEART by Philippe Garrel

1992 THE SENTINEL BY Arnaud Desplechin

#### **ACTRESS**

2007 ACTRESSES by Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi

2006 THE BIG APARTMENT by Pascal Thomas

2006 SCHOOL FOR ALL by Eric Rochant

2005 BACKSTAGE by Emmanuelle Bercot

2005 ONE STAYS, THE OTHER LEAVES by Claude Berri

2004 KINGS & QUEEN by Arnaud Desplechin

2003 FRANCE BOUTIQUE by Tonie Marshall

2002 IF I WERE A RICH MAN by Gérard Bitton and Michel Munz

2001 MY WIFE IS AN ACTRESS by Yvan Attal

# **FLORENCE SEYVOS SELECTIVE BIOGRAPHY**

## **SCREENWRITER**

2007 LET'S DANCE!

2003 FEELINGS

1999 LIFE DOESN'T SCARE ME

1998 LES ANNÉES LYCÉE: PETITES

## **AUTHOR**

2002 "The Abandonment "

1998 "Gratia"

1995 "The Appearances"

1991 "Without Enthusiasm"

1990 "The Day When I was Boss"

## **AUTHOR OF ILLUSTRATED WORKS**

2003 "The Friend of the Little Tyrannosaur"

1996 "Poached" 1996

1994 "The Teddy-Bear Thief"

1993 "The Storm"

1991 "Night at Salomé's"

1990 "Pascal's Mistake"

## **CAST**

<b>Salomon</b>	<b>Jean-Pierre Marielle</b>
<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi</b>
<b>Violette</b>	<b>Sabine Azema</b>
<b>Geneviève</b>	<b>Bulle Ogier</b>
<b>Monsieur Mootoosamy</b>	<b>Bakary Sangaré</b>
<b>François</b>	<b>Arié Elmaleh</b>
<b>Adolf Hitler</b>	<b>John Arnold</b>
<b>Marie-Hélène</b>	<b>Anne Alvaro</b>
<b>Client Manager</b>	<b>Nicolas Maury</b>
<b>Army medical officer</b>	<b>Daniel Emilfork</b>
<b>Female student</b>	<b>Judith Chemla</b>
<b>Russian woman</b>	<b>Tsilla Chelton</b>
<b>Nurse</b>	<b>Cécile Reigher</b>
<b>Psychiatrist</b>	<b>Michel Fau</b>
<b>Sarah, age 8</b>	<b>Jutta Sammel</b>
<b>Gynaecologist</b>	<b>Michele Gleizer</b>
<b>Tap-dancing instructor</b>	<b>Philippe Nagau</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Rosette</b>

## CREW

Directed by	Noémie Lvovsky
Screenplay	Noémie Lvovsky, Florence Seyvos
Cinematographer	Jean-Marc Fabre (AFC)
Editor	Emmanuelle Castro
Original music	Archie Shepp
Performed by the Archie Shepp Quartet	
Sound	Brigitte Taillandier Sylvain Malbrant Nicolas Moreau Emmanuel Croset
Art Designer	Marie Cheminal
Costumes	Dorothee Guiraud
Animation	Anaïs Vaugelade
Casting	Stéphane Batut
1st assistant director	Olivier Genet
Scriptgirl	Olivia Bruynoghe
Make-up artist	Delphine Jaffart
Hair stylist	Jean-Marie Cuvilo
Hairstyle creations	Madeleine Cofano Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi
Hairstyle creations	José Luis Casas Sabine Azema
Production	Why Not Productions (Pascal Caucheteux - Grégoire Joilute)
Executive producer	Martine Cassinelli
Post-production	Laurencina Lam
Associate Producer (Switzerland)	Ruth Waldburger
Production Manager (Switzerland)	Jean-Marie Gindraux
International sales	UGC International
Video editions	UGC Video
Stills photographer	Jean-Claude Lothar
Artwork	Rageman
Trailer	SoniaToutCourt

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Vega Film - Télévision Suisse Romande

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Cinématographie

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