THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

A FILM BY RÉMI BEZANÇON
MANDARIN CINÉMA presents

THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

Jacques Gamblin
Zabou Breitman
Déborah François
Marc-André Grondin
Pio Marmai

A FILM BY Rémi Bezançon

114 minutes
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SYNOPSIS

Marie-Jeanne and Robert have three children: Albert, Raphaël and Fleur. This portrait of their family is sketched out over twelve years, through five key days. Five crucial days in the life of a five-person family. Five days that are more important than any others, and after which nothing will ever be the same again.
THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, your second film, traces the portrait of a family. What made you want to look at this subject?

My own family is very important to me, and even if there is nothing autobiographical in this film, I wanted to pay homage to my family in my own way. I have always wondered who I’d be if I’d been raised by parents other than my own. I’d surely have been someone completely different, but who? Family life is both what shapes us and from what we struggle to free ourselves. It’s a place from where everything is imparted but also a place full of impasses. But are we able to make choices about what we inherit? What role does the family play in our personal trajectory? And what part is ours to decide? These questions have already been presented in my first film, LOVE IS IN THE AIR, and in my shorts. And each one of my characters gives their own answer.

The life of the Duval family is told over twelve years but in just five days. Why did you choose this structure?

The idea of filming a key day in the life of each family member came about during the scriptwriting process. Even in the closest of families, every person is very different. I thought a star-shaped construction would best show this otherness. Each of the five days corresponds to one member of the family and we follow them closely from morning to night. The difficulty was ensuring that we didn’t lose the other characters as we changed point of view. Rather than an ensemble film, I wanted to make a film with five leading characters, as I was interested in seeing how each person influences the other members of his or her family. And that meant I could play around with long gaps in time. I like the idea of letting the audience imagine what has happened in the meantime.

This narrative construction have any impact on your directing?

Yes. We arranged it so that each day, our chief cameraman Antoine Monod would have his own cinematographic logic that would be interpreted for the character we were following. For example, the eldest child Albert’s day, when he’s leaving the family home, was filmed using a wide angle which serves to accentuate distances, to distance the characters from one another and thus to underline the character’s move towards independence. The youngest child Fleur’s day, as she rebels, is shot using a shoulder-held camera. For Raphaël, the middle child, we used a steadycam; slightly floaty, just like him. Marie-Jeanne, the mother, was wrapped in an atmosphere of intimacy, with the background blurring behind her thanks to a long lens. And for the final day, that of Robert, the father, I wanted a calm day, with a light that shows the lines, a little like in the paintings of Edward Hopper.

INTERVIEW WITH RÉMI BEZANÇON
Despite its humor and energy, your film has a sense of nostalgia about it. Childhood seems like a paradise lost. Could one say that the passing time is like a standalone character in the film?

At the heart of a family is where you best sense the passing of time, especially when you see old Super 8 films of your childhood! Children grow up, parents grow old, and depending on where you are in that family, your perspective differs. Each person develops his or her own relationship with time. Flowing ahead without looking back in order to escape the regrets and the soul-searching, Albert lives his life on fast-forward. Raphael lives his more in slow motion, to him, tomorrow is like eternity. There is no desperate-to-grow-up that’d move into the cellar to age quicker like a bottle of wine, whereas Marie-Jeanne wishes time would stop, or better still, would like to turn back the clock. And Raphaël, like any good hedonist, takes each day as it comes. I found it fun to present these different characters’ different rhythms of life: the children, the parents and even the grandparents who also often think that their own children never grow up, even when they’ve had grey hair for years!

Did you have Etienne Daho’s song “Le Premier Jour (du Reste de ta Vie)” [The First Day of the Rest of Your Life] in mind as you wrote the script?

The title for the film actually came from a line from Sam Mendes’ masterpiece AMERICAN BEAUTY. I have to admit that I’d never heard Etienne Daho’s song. My producer Isabelle Grellat played it to me once I’d finished writing the script. I thought it was wonderful and I was amazed at the extent to which the words reflected my film. From then on, I could only think of one thing: using the song to end the film with something wonderful.

Are you sure there’s nothing autobiographical in the film?

Of course I’m inspired by my own experiences. I have two older brothers and a little sister of whom we were a little protective, like in the film. But their lives have nothing to do with my characters of course, even if in the first version of the film there were four Duval children like us. I cut one of the characters to refocus the action, sacrificing the one who was closest to me. So I no doubt projected myself equally into each of the other characters. I fed them with a million details picked up here and there and sometimes very far from my own family universe. You may find things that have happened to you...
DAY AFTER DAY

The day you gain your independence,
the day you lose your innocence,
the day you fall in love,
the day you accept you're growing old,
the day you...
Albert is 20 years old, at an age to become independent. To his mother’s great displeasure, he moves into a tiny apartment above where his grandfather lives. And just like in a game of musical chairs, the place he frees up in the house pushes the other family members to change their roles.

The empty chair
In a family, one is always modeled by how others see us. So all it takes is for one to leave to transform all the others. When Albert leaves home, the other family members each react in their own manner. His brother Raphaël thinks he’ll finally be able to breathe. Flurried tries to move into his room and Robert decides to create an office. Or is it a garage? He is a taxi driver after all! Whatever the case, he keeps his record collection in it. This is a perfect occasion to show who is the head of this family. Only Marie-Jeanne experiences this event as a drama and an empty space to enshrine. “Our family is breaking up!” On this day, I wanted to capture the precise moment when each member of the family has to reconsider their place.

A man in a hurry
Albert’s first words in the film are: “I’m leaving!” Yes, but where? And what is he leaving behind him? Albert is the oldest child, the one upon whom the family’s ambition rests. And in fact, he seems to be succeeding at everything apart from he’s screwing up on what’s essential. In a rush to escape his anger, his shame, his desire to punch the walls or his brother’s face, he races head down into life. He needs some time to realize he’s on the wrong path.

Not afraid of the dark
Albert is a pretty tough character. He’s the one upon whom the hidden frustrations and old family conflicts weigh. So it’s natural that he should leave home on a few bitter hangovers and quickly decides to go. But he also has one great strength: he’s not afraid to change – his opinions, his direction or his career. Because deep down, he knows that the best things never change and that’s proven by THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN, which is still just as good as it ever was. When he watches this film in his tiny box room, the words still resound in his head as when he was a child and played them out with his brother.

Pio Marmaï
Even if you don’t take any big risks, it’s always very exciting to gamble on young and still unknown actors, and to discover new talents. So I set out to find that rare pearl, and when I met Pio Marmaï, I was knocked out by his charisma and the strength of his gaze. He was going to be exceptional. And he never stopped surprising me!

WEDNESDAY 24 AUGUST 1988

«Families are machines that crush your emotions.»
Five years have gone by and today, it’s Fleur’s 16th birthday. The perfect day to lose one’s virginity, and to remind one’s mother that she’s no spring chicken anymore. The daughter-mother war has begun, and there will be blood!

Smells like teen spirit
I remember very clearly the vague and worrying impression of solitude, incomprehension and exaltation that is condensed into this period of our lives: adolescence. We felt it all, didn’t we? Fleur shows her collection of no-entry signs on her bedroom door, sticks photos on the walls – preferably of her idol Kurt Cobain – and conscientiously rips her jeans in the hope of annoying her parents. The problem arises when instead of getting mad, her mom finds it more fun to imitate her daughter.

Vintage 1990s
Fleur is a teenager during the grunge years at the start of the 1990s. I wanted to put this period on the screen because it totally carries all the disenchantment I wanted to find in Fleur’s eyes. The 1990s had something tragic about them – the death of the 20th century.

Moments of intimacy
In undertaking writing this character, I wondered how to get under the skin of a 16-year-old girl. I started by delving into my own memories of my adolescence, my super-heightened passions, my pathetic attempts at rebellion towards my parents, my doubts and my fears. Using the prop of a personal diary helped a lot. I tried to imagine what kind of secrets she’d keep and it was like she’d entrusted me with them.

Déborah François
to play this model little girl with her rebellion in full swing, Déborah François was the perfect actress. Despite her violence, her internal turmoil and her excesses, there is above all a fragile, sensitive and truly kind young girl. Déborah also has that contradiction in her: her outwardly angelic appearance hides an explosion of internal emotion that she knows how to express perfectly.

FLEUR
“You wouldn’t understand.”

Friday 3 December 1993
Just as he does every Saturday, Raphaël, 25, visits his grandpa who has decided to teach him the art of wine tasting. With a glass of Bordeaux in hand, they confide in one another. Pierre talks about Claudine, his wife, who died too young, before his grandchildren could get to know her. And Raphaël remembers Moïra, his first love. It’s an occasion for both of them to take a trip back in time.

**Procrastination**

Raphaël can’t even pronounce the word “procrastination”, and yet he is the very embodiment of the word. He who is always happy to postpone until tomorrow what he should have done the day before yesterday. Nothing bothers him. I love this kind of character, who’s a bit of a layabout so he doesn’t have any timetable and he’s up for any kind of fun, even the most wild. It’s a gift for a writer!

**Dreams and reality**

Raphaël is the one who carries the family’s dreams, as opposed to Albert who is in charge of the anxieties and obligations. Therefore, instead of moving forward in life, he’s spent ten years living a fantasy. And that’s his great work! Madly in love for years with a girl he only met for five minutes, he’s convinced he’ll be able to find her telephone number in the depths of his memory if he concentrates hard enough. And when he enters guitar competitions, he doesn’t play; he just pretends. Air guitar is very simple - you just need to use your imagination. All that makes him seem pretty cool to everybody, but you still have to be realistic: you can’t live on love, water and heavy metal alone. That’s the whole problem with dreams: the moment you wake up.

**The heir**

Raphaël is the heir to other people’s passions, especially those that have never been realized. His grandfather gives him his love for wine, his father, his love for rock, and Raphaël takes it all. And it’s thanks to his capacity for absorption that he finally finds his voice.

**Marc-André Grondin**

When I watched CRAY, the film by Jean-Marc Vallée, I was immediately entranced by Marc-André Grondin. His gaze that is both charming and childish perfectly fits with the character of Raphaël. He’s an exceedingly talented actor, lively and particular about his work, and above all, he has one quality that I appreciate above everything – he’s a “bullshit detector”. That’s what I call people who are capable of sensing when something sounds wrong – a dialogue, a situation or a costume. It’s not my term – I heard James Cameron use it when talking about Leonardo Di Caprio when he was directing him on TITANIC and I liked the expression.
In need of a good lay. That’s how Fleur describes her mother in her secret diary. Of course, Marie-Jeanne should never have read it, but how can one resist the temptation? These six words ring out throughout this interminable day that will push Marie-Jeanne over the edge into the crisis that is beying in her fifties.

Apocalypse now
Marie-Jeanne refuses to let go of her youth. The problem is that the 20 year-old in the house isn’t her Careyase, it’s her daughter. And Fleur lives like a girl of her age: without compromise. She’s more and more independent, chaotic and insolent, and she’s a master in the art of torturing her mother. Her mother resists as well as she can but while there are fighters, the war goes on.

Mom forever
With this apocalyptic day, I wanted to remind people that a mom will always be at the center of a family. That’s an homage I couldn’t resist making – even if it’s also an illusion – because beyond the idea that Fleur, Raphael and Albert have of their mother, Marie-Jeanne is above all a woman. And if as a mother, she seems immortal, as a woman she has sadly become vulnerable, and she’s full of desires, too. But can one remain desirable for all one’s life? That’s another question that quickly starts to grow away at us...

Zabou Breitman
When I met Zabou, I immediately felt she’d make a wonderful Marie-Jeanne, that mother who tries to regain her youth as her children leave theirs behind. In addition to being a great director, she’s a wonderful actress. She can express it all: the gentleness of a mother, the sensuality of a woman and the subtlest emotions, and all of it brought together with great acting skill. I felt like she understood Marie-Jeanne intimately.
ROBERT «Watching the three of you grow up is the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen in my life.»

Today, Robert learns something that will change the rest of his life irremediably. For him, a man who lives each day as if it were his last, this is a new challenge.

Rock’n’Robert

Robert’s character is not really one of a model father. On the contrary, there’s something of the latent teenager about him. You could easily see him at 20, in tight jeans, pointed-toe shoes and a leather jacket, religiously placing the latest Stones album on his record player. The whole Robert pass things on and is such has given Raphael his passion for guitar heroes. He also takes the time to hand on his values, showing Albert that it is never too late to confront one’s demons.

Taxi driver

Sometimes, it’s a special desire to shoot a particular scene that imposes certain elements on a story. When I started the script, I soon had in mind that Robert and his eldest son would have a real communication problem that would lead them to fall out. How can two people who no longer speak get back into conversation? I’m not particularly chatty, but if there is one place I can easily open up it’s in the back of a taxi cab. I had my scene: Albert gets in his father’s taxi by chance, and for appearance’s sake, the two men finally manage to talk. I had Roberts’s job.

Like a rolling stone

As a taxi driver, Robert lives like a social failure. But he tries to make up for it somehow or other in his role as a father. It should be noted that things weren’t too easy for him with his own father, played by the wonderful Roger Dumas. In an ideal world, Robert should have taken over the family vineyard, but the death of his mother plunged them into unspeakable pain, definitively destroying communication between the two of them.

Jacques Gamblin

When I write a script, I forbid myself from thinking about an actor in particular; I don’t want my characters to be influenced by an image, physique or a manner. And it’s disturbing, that encounter with the person who is going to take possession of a role. You think you know a character form head to toe and then suddenly, there they are in flesh and blood in front of you, and they reveal new sides to them that become obvious. Jacques likes talking about his role far upstream and it’s a great pleasure for a director to feel that his character will be played with such precision. I really enjoyed directing him. His instinct and his perfectionism, his charm and his elegance form an amazing mix. He’s both down to earth and has his head in the clouds at the same time. It’s a very inspirational paradox.
RÉMI BEZANÇON

DIRECTOR-SCRIPTWRITER

In development: A HAPPY EVENT
Based on the novel by Eliette Abecassis
Co-scriptwriter: Vanessa Portal

2007 THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE
With Jacques Gamblin, Zabou Breitman, Deborah François, Marc-André Grondin and Pio Marmaï

2004 LOVE IS IN THE AIR
With Vincent Elbaz, Marion Cotillard and Gilles Lellouche

SCRIPTWRITER

UN GRAND VERRE DE SAUVE LE VOLCAN
Based on the novel by Cécile Krug “Demain Matin si Tout va Bien”
Co-scriptwriter: Vanessa Portal

MALICORNE
A film by Jérôme Le Gris
Co-scriptwriters: Jérôme Le Gris and Xavier Denton

WOMEN FOR SALE
A film by Jean-Claude Jean
Co-scriptwriter: Jean-Claude Jean
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BELLEVUE by Claude Chabrol</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE by Reimi Beronsen</td>
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<td>A WIDOW AT LAST by Isabelle Marsault</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>THE TIGER BRIGADES by Jérôme Carnoux</td>
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<td>LES IRRÉDUCTIBLES by Renaud Bertrand</td>
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<td>SENNO by Joel Fossey</td>
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<td>IN YOUR WINE by David Oelofsen</td>
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<td>FRAGILE(S) by Martin Vazete</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>HELL by Denis Tanovic</td>
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<td>HOLY LOLA by Bertrand Tavernier</td>
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<td>24 DEGREES IN WINTER by Stéphane Valette</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>NICKEL AND DWIVE by Sam Kanonres</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>CARNAGES by Delphine Dixion</td>
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<td>SAFE CONDUCT by Bertrand Tavernier</td>
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<td>Silver Bear 2002 for Best Actor, Berlin International Film Festival</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>BELLA CANDY by Stéphane Guert</td>
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<td>MADEMOISELLE by Philippe Lioret</td>
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JACQUES GAMBLIN
Robert

CHILDREN OF THE MASHSHANDS by Jean Becker
Best Actor Award, Cabourg Romantic Film Festival 1999
AT THE HEART OF THE LIE by Claude Chabrol
DR. AGATI by Shokheh Ammarzadeh
MADEMOISELLE by Jean-Paul Salomé
GOODBYE PRINCESS by Jorge-Paixao da Costa
ALL THAT... FOR THIS?! by Claude Lebouch
THE BEAUTIFUL STORY by Claude Lebouch
THERE WERE DAYS... AND MOONS by Claude Lebouch
ZABOU BREITMAN
Marie-Jeanne

2007  THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE by Romain Benazic
       BANCS PUBLICS by Bruno Podalydès
       CROSSFIRE by Claude Michel Rame
       PERFUMES OF THE LADY IN BLACK by Bruno Podalydès
       NARCO by Tristan Arnoud & Gilles Latkochou
       2003  ALMOST PEACEFUL by Michel Deville
       THE PERFUMES OF THE LADY IN BLACK by Bruno Podalydès
       2002  BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES by Zabou Breitman
       1999  LITTLE BUSINESS by Pierre Axlet
       1998  LE BEAU BY YVES AMOREUX by Yves Amoreux
       1997  LA DOUBLE DE MA MOITIE by Robert Lamotte
       1996  THE IDEA MAN by Xavier Gélin
       1995  KITCHEN WITH APARTMENT by Poula Nivu
       1994  THE CRISIS by Coline Serreau
       1993  C'EST LA VIE by Diane Kurys
       1992  LE BEAU BY YVES AMOREUX by Yves Amoreux
       1991  JUST BEFORE THE STORM by Bruno Herbulot
       2000  CAMPING SAUVAGE by Gérard Jugnot
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       1992  LE BEAU BY YVES AMOREUX by Yves Amoreux
       1991  JUST BEFORE THE STORM by Bruno Herbulot
DÉBORAH FRANÇOIS
Fleur
2007  THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE by Rémi Bezançon
FEMALE AGENTS by Jean-Paul Salomé
2006  L’ETE INDIEN by Alain Resnais
RED ANTS by Stephan Carpiaux
2005  THE PAGE TURNER by Denis Dercourt
César nomination for Best Female Newcomer
2004  THE CHILD by Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne
César nomination for Best Female Newcomer

MARC-ANDRÉ GRONDIN
Raphaël
2007  THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE by Rémi Bezançon
BOUQUET FINAL (DES FLEURS POUR TOUS LE MONDE) by Michel Delgado
2006  THE BEAUTIFUL BEAST by Karim Hussain
2004  C.R.A.Z.Y. by Jean-Marc Vallée
Best Actor, Jutra Awards
Best Actor, Vancouver Film Critics Circle
1994  LES FLEURS MAGIQUES by Jean-Marc Vallée
1993  LA FEITE DES ROIS by Marquise Lapage
1991  DE L’AUTRE CÔTÉ DU COEUR by Suzy Cohen
LA FENÊTRE by Monique Champagne

PIO MARMAÏ
Albert
2007  THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE by Rémi Bezançon
CAST

Robert Jacques Gamblin
Marie-Jeanne Zabou Breitman
Fleur Déborah François
Raphaël Marc-André Grondin
Albert Pio Marmaï
Pierre Roger Dumas
Prune Cécile Cassel
Eric Stanley Weber
Clara Sarah Cohen-Hadria
Moïra Camille de Pazzis
Sacha Aymeric Cormerais
Mathias Moreau Jean-Jacques Vanier
Philippe Lefebvre
François-Xavier Demaison
Gilles Leclercq
Françoise Briot

CREW

Director and scriptwriter
Rémi Bezançon
Producers
Isabelle Grellat
Eric Altmayer
Nicolas Altmayer
Director of photography
Antoine Monod
Editor
Sophie Reine
Sound
Eddy Laurent
Olivier Walczak
Anne Gibourg
Post-production manager
Patricia Colombat
First assistant director
Jean-Louis Frémont
Casting
Artistic collaboration
Maya Serrulla
Vanessa Portal

Dog owner

Director of photography
Nicolas Altmayer
Eric Altmayer

Costumes
Marie-Laure Lasson

Production manager
Théophile Lambert

First assistant director
Jacques Gabrielli

Zabou Bensemra
Cécile Cassel

Director of photography
François-Xavier Demaison

Artistic collaboration
Emmanuel Croset

Music
Sinclair

Post-production manager
Sacha Aymeric Cormerais

Set design
Maamar Ech-Cheikh

Production manager
Thierry Muscat

Costumes
Jacques Gabrielli

Assistant director
Emmanuel Croset

Sound
Olivier Walczak

Music
Nicolas Altmayer

Casting
Sarah Cohen-Hadria