

STUDIO CANAL



© photos Luc Roux / Willy Huyey

Christine GOZLAN and Alain TERZIAN present

Karin Dany Marina Patrick Emmanuelle Christopher
VIARD BOON FOIS BRUEL SEIGNER THOMPSON
Marina Patrick Blanca Laurent Pierre
HANDS CHESNAIS LI STOCKER and ARDITI

CHANGE OF PLANS
a film by Danièle THOMPSON (LE CODE A CHANGÉ)

French release date 18 february 2009
Running time 1h40

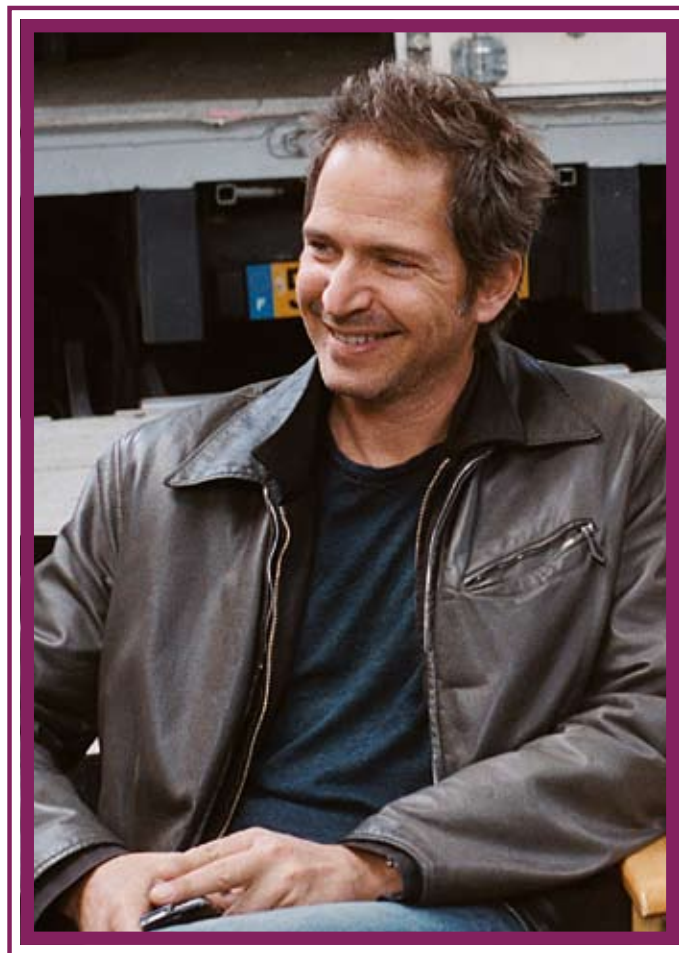
StudioCanal
International Marketing
1, place du Spectacle
92863 Issy-les-Moulineaux Cedex 09
France
Tél. : 33 1 71 35 11 13
Fax : 33 1 71 35 11 86
www.studiocanal.com



SYNOPSIS

A dinner party is the dictatorship of appearances: you dress up, laugh, tell stories, pose, share memories and plans. Anxiety is concealed behind humor and pain stifled by bursts of laughter. And for a few hours, you're taken in! That's all that counts.

If you have the right codes, respect the other guests, cordiality, hypocrisy and high spirits, there's a chance it'll be a good evening... But the masks slip on the way home.



INTERVIEW WITH DANIÈLE THOMPSON AND CHRISTOPHER THOMPSON

"WE MAY BE MERRY BUT WE'RE NOBODY'S FOOLS." EUGÈNE IONESCO

Did the success of AVENUE MONTAIGNE in France and abroad motivate or discourage you to write another film?

Danièle Thompson — It wasn't discouraging at all. And it's much more fun to start writing again after a success than a failure. However, now the film is finished, of course I'm scared of disappointing; of not being up to the task.

Christopher Thompson — We wondered what kind of a film we were going to do afterwards. We wanted to move into a different area, but at the same time continue in a similar spirit...

Danièle Thompson — Maintain a style.

How would you define that style?

Danièle Thompson — We want to hold the viewer in a state between laughter and emotion. That's something that is closer to the Italian or English language approach because the French make either comedies or tragedies. The style isn't something we choose, but something that we discover as we advance in our work. When you make a film, you know what you want but you don't know what you're doing. And in that respect, I love what Scorsese said: "Making a

film is like trying to write In Search of Lost Time in a dodgem".

Christopher Thompson — The aim was to make a totally personal film with the hope that it would be as appealing as possible.

Danièle Thompson — I came to directing late. After having worked with directors as diverse as my father Gérard Oury, Patrice Chéreau and Claude Pinoteau, one might have wondered what kind of films I was going to make. Tragedies? Comedies? My answer was LA BUCHE — something between comedy and melancholy. Since then, all my films have had that in common because to me, it's part of life. I'm a cheerful woman who can, like many others, laugh out loud at a funeral while I'm torn to pieces inside.

Christopher Thompson — Moving from laughter to emotion in the same minute is something that happens in life but which is quite tricky to transcribe into the tone of a film.

Danièle Thompson — I like laying gravity under the laughter. But although I understand the ecstasy of despair, it's not really my thing.

Christopher Thompson — You're more head-on with the idea of the daily

tragedies of life. And Alain, the oncologist in the film played by Patrick Bruel, who comes into constant contact with sickness and death is the chattiest person in the script. He tells stories all through dinner while he's being eaten up inside.

The tone of AVENUE MONTAIGNE was similar to a fairytale or fable. This new film is in a more contemporary register...

Danièle Thompson — It's a more real universe. We've gone from Avenue Montaigne to this house in the Belleville neighborhood of Paris, with characters who, even if they are privileged, have more ordinary jobs such as doctors, lawyers, a kitchen designer, a flamenco teacher, a sailor and a costume designer.

Christopher Thompson — The subject and the form of the film naturally introduced a certain everydayness. But it's never dull to organize or go to a dinner party. There are different things at stake that have greater implications and demand deeper things than simply doing the shopping or making the table look pretty. That's what we wanted to explore.

Where did the idea for CHANGE OF PLANS come from?

Christopher Thompson — The first time you talked to me about it was after AVENUE MONTAIGNE was released. There

was this idea of when you arrive at a dinner party, you have to seem like everything is fine because it's polite to keep up appearances.

Danièle Thompson — The film really is an illustration of your grandfather's favorite saying: "It's polite to be cheerful." But I'd also quote Ionesco: "We may be merry but we're nobody's fools." We wanted to show how you mask how you're feeling, your anxieties and your sadness when you're performing. It's true for all the characters, ML in particular, played by Karin Viard, who seems to be doing so well when she reveals, a year later, that she was doing so badly that night.

Christopher Thompson — The starting point was imagining what happens backstage during an evening among friends. You all arrive with your baggage that you put on one side to keep up appearances and make the moment bearable, and you end up believing in it.

Danièle Thompson — As Juliette, played by Marina Hands, says: "In any case, a dinner party where nobody says anything to each other is a pain. A dinner where it all comes out is hell!" We had to find a balance between the two, all the more so given that if you reveal what they are in their lives, on a professional, personal, emotional, friendship level, you're also revealing what they think or say about each other. During this dinner, certain problems break the surface, stories are created, and relationships are born. We're dealing with social life — with a way of presenting oneself, even if that involves hypocrisy or lies, that allows us to survive. We can't "survive" in truth.

Christopher Thompson — It's hard to define the boundary between politeness and hypocrisy, to find the right shade for the protective gloss that enables us to socialize.

Given the number of characters, the fragmented construction and intersecting stories, was this script harder to write than those for previous films?

Danièle Thompson — It gets harder every time! Personally, I always find delivery painful. I don't know what you think...

Christopher Thompson — We start again from zero with every script. Here, the difficulty was knowing what happens before, during and after this dinner party. That gave us the idea to fragment the story in order to give it an original narrative form because our films are always written within a defined place and time.

Danièle Thompson — It's hard to get back into a year's worth of discussions, notes, and hard thought, of knowing when such and such a thing was thought... That's part of the mystery



of writing but I remember one day when we both really came up against a wall. We were moving forwards within a framework and it seemed impossible to us to sit the characters around a table and to remain that way for an hour. We wanted to come out of the house to follow these people in their lives and their worlds, to project them in time. That's when we had the idea that the hostess, ML, would try to fix up with her friends a year later to reunite the group.

Christopher Thompson — During that evening, one works out the connections that will be made and unmade. What has happened to them a year later? It's also a way of talking about the time that has passed...

Danièle Thompson — ...with all the changes, the fragmentation of lives that can happen in a year: Births, deaths, losing your job, separating, meeting someone new...

Christopher Thompson — Through the courses our characters lives take, we wanted to show that fraction of a second when a meeting, an accident or a decision that at the time might seem insignificant, later proves to have radically changed our lives, for better or for worse.

The film takes place on World Music Day...

Danièle Thompson — It gives another feel to the film. And it's also the first day of summer; the longest day...

Christopher Thompson — It has the advantage of putting down a marker in time.

Danièle Thompson — There's a special feeling in the streets that brings color to the film and plays a role in the dramatic development of some of the characters.

Did the difficulties in writing and the difficulties in editing prove to be the same?

Danièle Thompson — The geography of the action is different in the editing process to what one imagines in the script. You have to constantly play with time, always thinking about what you're supposed to know about a character before or after.

Christopher Thompson — We knew that the editing would be tricky.

Danièle Thompson — It's also the fascinating and mysterious thing about this kind of story. As soon as the script was written, I called my editor, Sylvie Landra, to warn her that it was going to be a very complicated experience!

Did you immediately know there would be eleven lead characters?

Danièle Thompson — No.

Christopher Thompson — It emerged as we were writing. It was like a dinner party — the guests don't all arrive at the same time!

Danièle Thompson — We wanted to have a group of friends...

Christopher Thompson — ...with a central core, and a few hangers-on.

Danièle Thompson — And absolutely not an urbane dinner. There are those who were invited and didn't come. Those who weren't expected. The hosts are going through a crisis; ML has just lost her mother and Piotr, played by Dany Boon, has just lost his job. They are inaugurating their new kitchen. We spent a long time deciding whom they'd invite. There are their close friends, the doctors played by Marina Foïs and Patrick Bruel; the couple who in principle, don't know anybody and who come despite themselves, played by Christopher Thompson and Emmanuelle Seigner; and those who are invited at the last minute, like the flamenco teacher played by Bianca Li, but whom they wish they hadn't invited.





How do you give character to so many?

Danièle Thompson — Who do we want to talk about? Who are these people? Their problems, their anxieties, their humor? And then afterwards, as always, we met the “real” ones: Lawyers and doctors... People in every field. There is a special jargon and language elements unique to each and one must know them so that the characters sound authentic.

As the story progresses, you flush out one’s weakness, another’s betrayals, the greatest cowardice, the most pathetic ambivalence. We can hate them at times, love them at others, but in the end, we never judge them...

Danièle Thompson — I don’t know if we judge them, but from the moment the viewer comes out of the film preferring one character to another, they become a judge of sorts.

Christopher Thompson — What we enjoy when we tell stories is identifying with people, recognizing — up close or from afar — something of ourselves.

Danièle Thompson — I was telling a friend that our films deal with a lot of lying and he replied that they also deal with a lot of reconciliation. I have a certain cinematic tradition in my head that means I like it when one comes out of a film feeling happy, even if not all the stories necessarily have a happy ending.

Christopher Thompson — And we don’t really finish them either.

Danièle Thompson — But when the film is over, there’s a kind of reconciliation, an appeasement or a truce...

Christopher Thompson - ...even if there’s not a happy ending, we stop the story at a point when events are taking a better turn.

Danièle Thompson — Exactly. At the end, we hope things’ll be OK for ML



and Piotr but we’re not to judge. I like it that this lawyer who specializes in marriage breakdowns understands nothing about his own. And moreover, if his marriage does survive, it’s due to lies or hiding the truth.

Christopher Thompson — CHANGE OF PLANS deals with our relationship with lies. It’s interesting to tackle compromise head-on. Not the complacent compromise one might have with oneself so as not to assume responsibility for one’s behavior or



commitments, but the kind of compromise one chooses to protect someone else. Arrangements, even the least glorious kind, are part of life and of human nature, for better or for worse.

Danièle Thompson — Especially in relationships!

Christopher Thompson — What one keeps to oneself, what one decides to share, and the fine line between honesty and protecting someone else by not revealing everything all the time. At the heart of the film, there is that problem with relationships, with the coexistence of two individuals.

CHANGE OF PLANS is the portrait of a generation, forty-somethings who don’t get many movies made about them...

Danièle Thompson — And yet it’s a generation of assessment. One is no longer very young, but still young enough to be able to change one’s life.

The older characters played by Pierre Arditi and Patrick Chesnais are pretty cynical about the previous generation...

Danièle Thompson — It’s always been like that. There’s a kind of astonishment at the next generation.

They have an amazing scene where they dance together...

Danièle Thompson — I was pretty nervous about it because that scene had to be a real comedy moment. It totally depended on how they danced. I’ve always found it funny to see how we have the same



movements when we're 15 as we do for the whole of our lives. The first time Pierre and Patrick came to the house, I was with Denis Bergohne, my first assistant director, and we put on some music and they started to dance in front of us. And as I'd hoped, they danced as they'd danced at their first party. I was enchanted.

Christopher Thompson — The connection between them was established very quickly with a shared history and shared references. And that dance that cemented their budding friendship like revenge against the younger group having fun in the room next door.

Danièle Thompson - In *MANHATTAN*, there's a memorable scene where Woody Allen explains to Mariel Hemingway all the things he loves that she doesn't know. That also demonstrates the difficulties of a love story between a man and a woman of different ages. No doubt Juliette, played by Marina Hands, does not understand any of Erwann's (Patrick Chenaï) records.

(to Danièle Thompson) Is this generation different to yours?

Danièle Thompson — Yes, of course. But the way couples wear down, and the freedom of women were already part of mine.

Has the way you view your characters changed over the years?

Danièle Thompson — That's a hell of a question! No, I don't think so. I've always seen people with clarity but with cynicism. That's the area I'm in. Do you think I see people differently today?

Christopher Thompson — There's perhaps more complexity in the way you tackle the characters.

One of the pleasures of the film is the casting. Did you have anyone in mind while you were writing?

Danièle Thompson — None of the faces we had in mind appear in the film! Casting a movie like this is a complete nightmare because you have to both create a balance and an imbalance. There are those you want and who aren't available or who don't want to do it. There are those who want to do it but you don't want them. And there's an amazing period of constructing the group with meetings and get-togethers. You kind of approach it on tiptoe.

Christopher Thompson — One combination works, another doesn't. As usual, there is a trail of characters flowing towards the actor and a trail of actors flowing towards the character. Sometimes it can be a very short trail and sometimes, it's more of a trail!

Danièle Thompson — I don't try to talk actors into roles. I'm not interested in people who don't want to work with me. I've always been that way. Dany Boon called me back right away — this was before *WELCOME TO THE STICKS* was released. Marina Foïs, Patrick Bruel, Karin Viard and the others did, too.

And what about Christopher?

Danièle Thompson — It's different with him. Each time, we're both a little shy about it. For this film, it may seem strange, but we honestly only thought about him to play Lucas at the end of the writing process.

Christopher Thompson — It's true, we didn't discuss it before. I liked the idea of playing an arrogant character who is dry and disagreeable. It's something I hadn't done before. I liked the idea of defending this lawyer to the very ends of his idiosyncrasies and also showing the humanity he has buried inside him.

How did the shoot go with the actors?

Danièle Thompson — Extraordinarily well! The dinner party scene was shot in four weeks. Apart from Pierre Arditi who arrives later, we had to have all ten there the whole time. Technically, it was very complicated to organize given everybody's separate needs. And all the more so given that five of the actors were on stage in the theater every night.

Christopher Thompson — We started shooting with the dinner party. We stayed a month in that house, around the table. We worked a lot but we laughed a lot, too. And putting our differences aside, there was a kind of osmosis, a team spirit and a feeling of solidarity between us all.

This is your fourth film together. Would you say that your work has evolved?

Christopher Thompson — We've definitely changed since LA BUCHE ten years ago. We're just the same but we're no longer the same...

Danièle Thompson — He's matured and I've gotten old...

Christopher Thompson — Each time, there's more sharing and more understanding of each other in the work. While the pleasure to work together is there, it's essential.

Danièle Thompson — It's extremely rare to spend months with a member of one's family, to sit around a table and talk about life for five or six hours a day, but it happened with my father and it's happening with my son. In the start, this working partnership — which today seems perfectly obvious — was very mysterious. We didn't know if it would work, if it would be any good. LA BUCHE was a real dry run. And now that we know, we mustn't allow it to become listless and end up feeling like we're always doing the same thing as happens with relationships.



Christopher Thompson — You need to consider if it's a good idea to do it again, if we've still got things to say together. It's neither obvious nor automatic for either of us. And it shouldn't be so. It must remain a choice.

What do you feel you bring to each other through your films?

Danièle Thompson — He keeps on surprising me with his interventions and his points of view. And that's the key to any partnership. I think Christopher brings great clarity, sincerity and accuracy, and I

value that very highly in our work. And contrary to the couple we were talking about earlier, the generation gap — and the difference in our points of view — is very enriching.

Christopher Thompson — We bring each other — and continue to bring each other — more confidence and freedom. It's a very precious gift for both of us, to know that there's someone who cares right there, who won't let anything slip past. Having worked for a few months on my own film, I now have a better understanding of the position of the scriptwriter who has to be both extremely

involved and creative, but who also has to accept being primarily at the service of the director.

Indeed, Christopher will be shooting his own film in the spring. It's a little like history repeating itself...

Danièle Thompson — Talking of continuity, my father — who was an actor in the start — made his first film at the same age as Christopher is now.



Thank God he's quicker than I was, having started very late, but the essential thing is making one's first film when one is ready. Having acted for a long time, he understands sets and shoots, which I didn't through my experience as a scriptwriter. It's a real change to make a film. Directing is a totally different job. It's a decision that goes without saying; it's something you either have or you don't have inside you. In Christopher's case, I think it's absolutely the right time.

There is something pretty colorful in the artistic direction of the film...

Danièle Thompson — In most contemporary films, you don't realize to what extent there's been research done in terms of the photography (Jean-Marc Fabre), the sets (Michèle Abbe) and the costumes (Catherine Leterrier). I wanted to make a film with very cheerful colors. It's the first day of summer, and even if there are nighttime scenes, I wanted them to be colorful. We worked very closely with Catherine Leterrier on the costumes as they had to not just reflect each character's personality, but also their development between the two periods. The characters had to keep their style but we also have to feel that they are not exactly the same. It's difficult to talk about sets because they are made so we don't see that they are sets. It's all about what's real and what's not. The natural sets and studio sets worked so well together that I challenge anyone to tell the difference!

This is your second collaboration with Nicola Piovani...

Danièle Thompson — He's a great musician. He creates a sound that is both cheerful and melancholy at the same time. He really liked that I asked him to create music that started out Italian and then became more Spanish. It

inspired him. I loved working with him on AVENUE MONTAIGNE where the score was important but because of pre-existing songs, was less significant than in CHANGE OF PLANS.

What's the secret of a successful dinner party?

Danièle Thompson — It's the same as with a movie — you have to leave it feeling that you had a good time.

Christopher Thompson — And that you feel better leaving than you did arriving.

Danièle Thompson — And that you'd gladly do it again.



FILMOGRAPHY DANIÈLE THOMPSON



DIRECTOR

- 2008 CHANGE OF PLANS**
Screenplay by Danièle Thompson and Christopher Thompson
- 2005 AVENUE MONTAIGNE**
Screenplay by Danièle Thompson and Christopher Thompson
César for Best Supporting Actress for Valérie Lemercier
César nominations for Best Actress for Cécile de France, for Best Supporting Actress for Dani, for Best Screenplay and for Best Editing
- 2002 JET LAG**
Screenplay by Danièle Thompson and Christopher Thompson
César nomination for Best Actress for Juliette Binoche
- 1999 LA BUCHE**
Screenplay by Danièle Thompson and Christopher Thompson
César for Best Supporting Actress for Charlotte Gainsbourg
César nominations for Best First Film and Best Screenplay
Best Screenplay at the Lumières de Paris

WRITER

- 2003 THE GIRAFFE'S NECK by Safy Nebbou**
Screenplay by Safy Nebbou, Danièle Thompson and Agnès Yobrégat
- 1998 BEAUTIFUL MOTHER by Gabriel Aghion**
Screenplay and dialogues co-written with Gabriel Aghion
based on an idea from Jean-Marie Duprez
- 1997 PAPARAZZI by Alain Berberian**
Screenplay co-written with Alain Berberian, adaptation and dialogues
co-written with Jean-François Halin, Vincent Lindon, Patrick Timsit
- 1996 THOSE WHO LOVE ME CAN TAKE THE TRAIN
by Patrice Chéreau**
Co-written with Patrice Chéreau
César nomination for Best Screenplay
- 1993 QUEEN MARGOT by Patrice Chéreau**
Screenplay, adaptation and dialogues co-written with Patrice Chéreau
César nomination for Best Screenplay
- 1992 THE GROUNDHOGS by Elie Chouraqui**
Screenplay, adaptation and dialogues co-written with Elie Chouraqui
- 1991 SNOW AND FIRE by Claude Pinoteau**
Screenplay and dialogues co-written with Claude Pinoteau
- 1988 VANILLE FRAISE by Gérard Oury**
Screenplay and dialogues co-written with Gérard Oury
- THE STUDENT by Claude Pinoteau**
Screenplay and dialogues co-written with Claude Pinoteau
- 1986 LEVY AND GOLIATH by Gérard Oury**
Screenplay and dialogues co-written with Gérard Oury
- 1985 MALADY OF LOVE by Jacques Deray**
Screenplay and dialogues co-written with Andrzej Zulawski
- 1984 THE VENGEANCE OF THE WINGED SERPENT
by Gérard Oury**
Screenplay and dialogues co-written with Gérard Oury
- 1982 THE PARTY 2 by Claude Pinoteau**
Screenplay and dialogues co-written with Claude Pinoteau
ACE OF ACES by Gérard Oury
Co-written with Gérard Oury
- 1980 THE PARTY by Claude Pinoteau**
Screenplay and dialogues co-written with Claude Pinoteau
- 1979 UMBRELLA COUP by Gérard Oury**
Screenplay and dialogues co-written with Gérard Oury
- 1978 OUT OF IT by Gérard Oury**
Co-written with Gérard Oury
- 1977 YOUR TURN, MY TURN
by François Leterrier**
Adaptation and dialogues, based on the novel by Françoise Dorin
- 1975 COUSIN, COUSINE by Jean-Charles Tachella**
Co-adaptation with Jean-Charles Tachella
Oscar nomination for Best Screenplay
- 1974 THE ADVENTURES OF RABBI JACOB by Gérard Oury**
Co-written with Gérard Oury
- 1970 DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR by Gérard Oury**
Co-written with Gérard Oury
- 1968 THE BRAIN by Gérard Oury**
Co-written with Gérard Oury
- 1966 DON'T LOOK NOW – WE'RE BEING SHOT AT
by Gérard Oury**
Co-written with Gérard Oury

FILMOGRAPHY NICOLA PIOVANI



COMPOSER

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| 2008 | CHANGE OF PLANS by Danièle Thompson | 1998 | YOU LAUGH by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani |
| 2007 | HER NAME IS SABINE by Sandrine Bonnaire | 1997 | LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL by Roberto Benigni - Oscar for Best Score |
| 2006 | ODETTE TOULEMONDE by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt | 1994 | DEAR DIARY by Nanni Moretti |
| | DON'T WORRY, I'M FINE by Philippe Lioret | 1993 | WILD FLOWER by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani |
| | AVENUE MONTAIGNE by Danièle Thompson | 1990 | THE SUN ALSO SHINES AT NIGHT by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani |
| 2005 | THE TIGER AND THE SNOW by Roberto Benigni | 1989 | THE VOICE OF THE MOON by Federico Fellini |
| 2004 | THE LIGHT by Philippe Lioret | 1987 | INTERVISTA by Federico Fellini |
| 2003 | LUISA SAN FELICE by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani | | GOOD MORNING BABYLONE by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani |
| 2002 | PINOCCHIO by Roberto Benigni | 1986 | GINGER AND FRED by Federico Fellini |
| 2001 | THE SON'S ROOM by Nanni Moretti | 1984 | CHAOS by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani |
| | RESURRECTION by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani | 1982 | THE NIGHT OF SAN LORENZO by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani |

CAST

ML
Piotr
Mélanie
Alain
Sarah
Lucas
Juliette
Erwann
Manuela
Jean-Louis
Henri

Karin Viard
Dany Boon
Marina Foïs
Patrick Bruel
Emmanuelle Seigner
Christopher Thompson
Marina Hands
Patrick Chesnais
Blanca Li
Laurent Stocker
Pierre Arditi

CREW

Directed by
Screenplay

Production

Executive producer
Production manager
Cinematography
Production design
Costumes
Editing
Sound

Music
Music supervisor
Photographer

Danièle Thompson
Danièle Thompson
Christopher Thompson
Thelma Films - Christine Gozlan
Alter Films - Alain Terzian
StudioCanal
TF1 Films Production
Radis Films Production
David Poirot
Yvon Crenn
Jean-Marc Fabre
Michèle Abbe
Catherine Leterrier
Sylvie Landra
Jean-Pierre Duret
Frédéric le Louët
Vincent Arnardi
Igor Thomas-Gérard
Nicola Piovani
Valérie Lindon
Luc Roux

NOTES

