

The Main Feature



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BELLEVILLE RENDEZVOUS

France/Canada/Belgium 2003. Running time: 80 minutes
Certificate 12A

Writer and Director: Sylvain Chomet
Music: Benoît Charest
Design: Eugeni Tomov
Animation director: Sylvain Chomet
Animation supervisor: Jean-Christophe Lie

With the voices of: Béatrice Bonifassi; Lina Boudreau;
Michèle Caucheteux; Jean-Claude Donda; Mari-Lou Gauthier;
Charles Linton; Michel Robin; Monica Viegas.



JOUR DE FÊTE

France, 1949. Running time: 80 minutes
Certificate U

Director: Jacques Tati
Writers: Jacques Tati, Henri Marquet,
Réne Wheeler
Music: Jean Yatove
Camera: Jacques Mercanton, Jacques
Sauvageot

Cast:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Roger | Guy Decomble |
| François, the postman | Jacques Tati |
| Marcel | Paul Frankeur |
| Roger's wife | Santa Relli |
| Jeanette | Maine Vallée |
| The tattler | Delcassan |
| The hairdresser | Roger Rafal |



The two French films in tonight's double bill are separated by nearly 55 years, but connected through: celebrating Frenchness ; a streak of anti-Americanism; storytelling through pictures rather than words (so there is little need to shift your chair to get a clear view of the subtitles); and bicycles.

Belleville Rendezvous is a cartoon film which offers a rich contrast to the smooth blandness of recent computer-generated offerings from Hollywood. Pixar it isn't. And while children will enjoy it, there is far more in the film for adults. Its writer and director, Sylvain Chomet, is also an artist for *bandes dessinées*, that very French way of story-telling through strip cartoons which appeals to all ages. Chomet has been quoted as saying 'Definitely I am not doing an animated film for kids, because that's what all the animated films are for. I feel there is so much to be done with animation for a large audience, and aiming mainly to the adults.' Chomet was rewarded with two Oscar nominations.

The story is about a grandmother, Mme Souza, her grandson Champion, and their ancient and rotund dog Bruno. In trying to find something that interests young Champion, Mme Souza finds newspaper cuttings of cyclists in his scrap book and buys him a tricycle which delights him and starts him out on a career towards competition in the Tour de France with Mme Souza as coach, physiotherapist and mechanic, despite her physical disability. Things take a turn for the worse when Champion, together with two other competitors, are kidnapped by organised criminals during the gruelling alpine stages. Mme Souza and Bruno, the plucky underdogs, then set themselves against organised crime to mount a rescue.

Much of the joy of the film is in the detail, for example in the *homages* to French stars Charles Trenet, Django Reinhardt, Josephine Baker (whose display – even though this is a cartoon – was apparently why the film gained a rating of 12A) and Jacques Tati, where we see a very short clip from tonight's other film *Jour de Fête*. But the joy is equally in the characterisation – Bruno's slipping on the polished floor and his barking at trains is just one instance. And we learn more about how Mme Souza is feeling through her habit of pushing her spectacles up her nose than anything she says. There is some terrific drawing too. I was particularly impressed by the scene of crossing the ocean in a pedalo to the accompaniment of Mozart's Mass in C minor.

Underneath it all, though, is a celebration of 'old' France. Mme Souza's house where Champion grows up becomes gradually absorbed into the city; Champion is taken to Belleville which resembles New York (complete with the Statue of Liberty holding a hamburger), has obese citizens and all the venality you could want. Old values are best – and the underdog can win.

Those sentiments are echoed in *Jour de Fête*, Jacques Tati's first feature-length film. The story is about the annual visit of the fair to a tiny village (actually Sainte-Sévère-sur-Indre in the Berry region, 200 km south-west of Paris), and in part it celebrates rural life. It also gently mocks the absurdities of pursuing modernism and efficiency at all costs. It opens with the fair coming into town, and has a running commentary from the old widow with the goat (played by male actor Delcassan) who acts rather like the chorus in a Greek tragedy. The film centres on the preparations for the fair (including putting up the flagpole) as well as the holiday spirit which infects everyone in the village. That includes the postman who, after seeing a film which extols the efficiency of the postal service in the United States, and having been given too much to drink, decides to streamline his own bicycle-based operations. The scene where he cycles along using the tailgate of a lorry as a desk to frank his letters is particularly fine. But on the whole, his efforts to change are ridiculous and the moral is that the sleepy French rural lifestyle is just fine. The film ends with the fair leaving the village, and the ripples it has caused settling down again.

Tati was born Jacques Tatischeff at Le Pecq in 1908. He did not enter the family business of picture framing and restoration, but began his career as a rugby player, then as a music hall and circus artiste between 1930 and the outbreak of the Second World War. One of his routines ('Oscar the tennis champion') was filmed in 1932. After the war in 1946 he made a short *L'École des Facteurs* (School for Postmen), and developed it in 1949 to the first full-length film he directed which we see tonight. He also stars as François, the gullible village postman. François predates M Hulot, Tati's more famous character who first appeared in 1953 in *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday*, but there are similarities, more than anything because Tati is a clown, with a rich streak of physical humour running through all his films. There is a good running joke with the wasp. There are stylistic similarities too with later films: few close-ups and many scenes just evolving in front of the camera.

Over 25 years, Tati made only five full films with the last, *Parade*, made in 1973. He died in 1982. He was keen to innovate, and planned that *Jour de Fête* should be the first full-length film to be made in France in colour. He used an untested process, Thomsoncolor, with a camera using black and white film as a back-up. That was just as well, since the laboratory was unable to process the colour stock and the film was seen only in black and white until 1995 when Tati's daughter, Sophie Tatischeff, led the restoration of the colour print we see now.

Michael Hipkins

News (Kindly prepared by Malcolm Walrond)

We have the Baftas, the Americans have the Oscars and the French have the Césars. The now familiar Marion Cotillard won Best Actress for the title role in *La Môme*, better known to us as *La Vie en Rose*. But the Best Film award went to *La Graine et le Mulet* - English title *The Secret of the Grain* - a film about an immigrant Tunisian family with dreams of opening a couscous restaurant. Its director, Abdel Kechiche, whose previous film *Games of Love and Chance* was released in 2004, won Best Director.

Best Actor went to Matthieu Amalric who plays the paralysed former editor of *Elle* magazine, Dominique Baulby, in *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* based on the remarkable book of the same name in which, though able to communicate only by eye movements, Baulby is able to dictate his thoughts while imprisoned in his paralysed body "like a butterfly in a diving bell."

The name Cotillard may be new to us but the name Depardieu certainly isn't. This time daughter Julie took the honours as Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Un Secret*, an excellent film set at first in the 50's before going back to reveal the secret of the tragic events which had befallen a Jewish family under the Occupation.

The Best Foreign Film was deservedly *The Lives of Others* and an honorary foreign César was bestowed on Robert Benigni, best known to us for *Life is Beautiful*.

Finally there was a special tribute to honour one of the great French actresses, Jeanne Moreau, on her 60-year (so far) career.

BBC NEWS

British film director and writer Anthony Minghella has died aged 54.

Minghella's films included *The English Patient* - which earned him an Oscar for best director in 1997 - as well as *Truly, Madly, Deeply* and *Cold Mountain*. He suffered a haemorrhage in London days after having surgery for cancer of the tonsils and neck, his US agent Leslee Dart said. Jude Law, who worked with Minghella on three films, said he was "deeply shocked and saddened" at the news. The actor described him as "a brilliantly talented writer and director" and "a sweet, warm, bright and funny man".

Law's co-star in *The Talented Mr Ripley*, Gwyneth Paltrow, said Minghella was "a wonderful man" who was "so interested in art and making the world better for art". Actor Kevin Spacey praised the director as "one of the greats". Film producer and friend Lord Puttnam said the industry would be "very shocked" to lose their "very well-loved" colleague. "He started as a writer, he was not a stylist as a director," he said. "He saw himself as a storyteller and his films were very well told, beautifully made and beautifully acted."

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who was directed by Minghella in a Labour Party broadcast before the 2005 General Election, also paid tribute. He said: "He was one of Britain's greatest creative talents, one of our finest screen writers and directors, a great champion of the British film industry and expert on literature and opera." Minghella had an operation for cancer last week, his representatives said. Leslee Dart said: "The surgery had gone well and they were very optimistic. But he developed a haemorrhage last night and they were not able to stop it."

He died at about 0500 GMT on Tuesday at the Charing Cross Hospital in Hammersmith, west London. Minghella's other roles included being chairman of the British Film Institute.

BBC film correspondent Tom Brook, speaking in New York, said Minghella was held in "very high regard by the artistic community". "He's certainly one of the top directors of his generation in Britain and, in Hollywood he was definitely held in high esteem," he said. Minghella began his career as a writer with his early radio plays winning several awards.

He made his directorial debut in *Truly, Madly, Deeply*, in 1991. He went on to write and direct film adaptations of Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* and Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr Ripley*. In 1999, he was nominated for an Oscar for writing *The Talented Mr Ripley* screenplay. He also directed 2003's *Cold Mountain*, starring Law, Kidman and Renee Zellweger, who won the best supporting actress Oscar for the film.

Reactions to

Consequences of Love – 28th February 2008

Score 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Votes ~ ~ ~ 5 2 2 9 8 5 1 2

Total Votes - 34 Average Score - 6.24 Position in Season - 9th

| Film | Score | Position |
|--------------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| The Lives of Others | 8.23 | 1 st |
| Little Miss Sunshine | 7.886 | 2 nd |
| Notes on a Scandal | 7.73 | 3 rd |
| Last King of Scotland | 7.73 | Joint 3 rd |
| Pans Labyrinth | 6.88 | 4 th |
| The Prestige | 6.86 | 5 th |
| Offside | 6.56 | 6 th |
| L'Enfant | 6.37 | 7 th |
| Consequences of Love | 6.24 | 8 th |
| Belle et la Bette | 5.97 | 9 th |
| Black Cat, White Cat | 5.74 | 10 th |
| The Day I became a Woman | 5.72 | 11 th |

Your views

Beautiful acting, but couldn't save the film from being slightly less exciting than watching paint dry.

Sleek stylish and full of suspense

Different, intriguing, well worth watching

Doesn't pay to be boring but someone had an extraordinary end

No good deed goes unpunished

Boring, absorbing, interesting, intriguing

Very slow

Terrific photography & terrific acting from Toni Seville

Next Time

10th April 2008 – The Painted Veil

Based on the novel by W. Somerset Maugham, The Painted Veil is a love story set in the 1920s that tells the story of a young English couple. In revenge for her infidelity he accepts a post in remote China where a deadly epidemic exists, and takes her along. Together they find purpose in one of the most remote and beautiful places on earth.



Usa/2006/125mins

Repropoint

sponsors photocopying of the main feature