

HADEWIJCH

Hadewijch



Bruno Dumont's exceptional film about faith and religious fervor begins as devout 20-year-old Céline is expelled from a nunnery, the mother superior—who calls her a “caricature of a nun”—disapproving of her self-starvation and self-mortification. Returned to the secular world, this too-ardent believer, we discover, is the child of a French cabinet minister and lives in a palatial Paris apartment. Our heroine soon meets Yassine, a rebellious Arab teenager from the banlieue who introduces her to the pleasure of stealing mopeds. But it is Yassine's older brother, Nassir, who most intrigues Céline; recognizing her religious seriousness, Nassir invites her to the Koran discussion group he leads. Although she doesn't convert to Islam, Céline becomes fascinated by Nassir's intense theological debates and his support of jihad. Dumont's powerful film, which takes its title from the name of a 13th-century poet, Hadewijch of Antwerp, profoundly (yet calmly) explores the relentless pursuit of faith in both Christianity and Islam—and what drives certain believers to acts of extreme violence.

“Like all of Mr. Dumont's films, ‘Hadewijch’ conjures the strange electricity (you might call it auras) around people, as if peeling away an outer layer of reality. The movie studies faces and bodies to locate the essence of humanness, especially in the eyes, behind which it finds both bestial and spiritual impulses and locates a primal isolation, as well as a lurking violence.”

Stephen Holden, The New York Times.

DIRECTOR

Bruno Dumont

SCREENPLAY

Bruno Dumont

CAST

Céline/Hadewijch: Julie Sokolowski

Nassir: Karl Sarafidis

Yassine: Yassine Salime

David: David Dewaele

GENRE

Drama

DISTRIBUTOR

IFC Films

RUNNING TIME 105'

PRODUCTION France, 2009

RATING Not Rated

GAUGE 35mm, DVD

DEUX DE LA VAGUE

Two in the Wave



The “two” in the title are François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard; the “wave” is the French New Wave, of which both men are the most renowned creators. Emmanuel Laurent’s fascinating documentary traces the friendship of these two legendary auteurs, who met in the movie-clubs of Paris and would later become colleagues in the 1950s as writers for *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Assembling a wonderful array of archival material (film clips, newspaper articles, interview footage), Laurent focuses on the great triumphs both men had with their debut features: Truffaut in 1959 with *The 400 Blows*, Godard in 1960 with *Breathless*—works that forever changed the history of cinema. Though they had very different backgrounds (Truffaut came from an unhappy working-class family, Godard from a distinguished Franco-Swiss clan), both men maintained a close, supportive friendship throughout most of the 1960s. Their tragic split began in the final years of that decade, as Godard’s films became more and more politicized; their ties were severed irrevocably in 1973 after Godard wrote a cruel letter to Truffaut attacking his film *Day for Night*. Laurent’s documentary is essential viewing for all those who wish to know more about these two invaluable mavericks.

“Two in the Wave,” while it provides plenty of biographical information, is above all interested in the artistic personalities of its subjects. It was, after all, the shared love of film that brought them together, despite their differences in temperament and background. And it was partly their divergent ideas about what cinema should become that drove the two men apart.”

A. O. Scott, The New York Times.

DIRECTOR

Emmanuel Laurent

WRITER / NARRATOR

Antoine de Baecque

PARTICIPANT

Isliid Le Besco

GENRE

Documentary

DISTRIBUTOR

Lorber Films

RUNNING TIME 93'

PRODUCTION France, 2009

RATING Not Rated

GAUGE Digibeta, DVD

DES DIEUX ET DES HOMMES

Of Gods and Men



Xavier Beauvois's sublime tale of faith and doubt is based on a real incident from 1996 that still reverberates in France. Eight French Trappist monks settle in an impoverished village in Algeria, offering medical assistance and gaining the locals' trust by taking part in Muslim traditions. Life, in many ways, is idyllic for the Catholic brothers as they tend to their honeybees and exalt God's glory; led by the abbot, they are frequently seen chanting and praying. This harmony is disrupted by the arrival of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), fundamentalist terrorists who demand that the monks leave, a request that is soon seconded by the Algerian military. Not wanting to abandon the destitute citizens who've come to rely on them, the brothers take a vote, ultimately deciding to stay—a resolution that seems even more perilous after Croatian volunteers are killed by the GIA. As the film leads up to the monks' inevitable doom, Beauvois considers the intransigence of religious belief: both for his white-robed martyrs and their brutal captors.

"Of Gods and Men" is a thrilling adventure of the spirit. Austere yet provocative, this is not only a film about faith, it also has faith that the power generated by complex moral decisions can be as unstoppable as any runaway locomotive."

Kenneth Turan, Los Angeles Times.

DIRECTOR

Xavier Beauvois

SCREENPLAY

Etienne Comar

CAST

Christian: Lambert Wilson
Luc: Michael Lonsdale
Christophe: Olivier Rabourdin

AWARDS

Grand Prix – Cannes Film Festival (2010). Best Film; Best Supporting Actor, Michael Lonsdale; Best Cinematography, Caroline Champetier – César Awards (2011) Best Picture; Best Actor, Michael Lonsdale – Lumière Awards (2011)

GENRE

Drama

DISTRIBUTOR

Sony Pictures Classics

RUNNING TIME 120'

PRODUCTION France, 2010

RATING PG-13 (for a momentary scene of startling wartime violence, some disturbing images and brief language)

GAUGE 35mm, Blu-ray, DVD

LA BELLE ENDORMIE

The Sleeping Beauty



As she did in 2009's *Bluebeard*, Catherine Breillat—cinema's most consistently intelligent investigator of female sexuality—has provocatively deconstructed another classic children's tale by Charles Perrault, upending conventional ideas about sex and gender. An infant girl is cursed to die at a tender age by a wicked witch; three good fairies recast the spell so that our heroine, Anastasia, will sleep for 100 years when she turns six, waking up as a beautiful teenager. In her prolonged slumber, the stalwart child declares her hatred for "the world of little girls" and their fondness for princess-y things, much preferring to get lost in her dictionary and the universe of new words. Her vivid dreamscape also includes adventures in a remote forest, where she is taken in by a widow and her teenage son, Peter; after further encounters with dwarves and albino monarchs, Anastasia finds a kindred spirit in a Gypsy girl. At last waking up from her century-long sleep, 16-year-old Anastasia discovers carnal pleasures with both a man and a woman—as well as crushing heartbreak.

"Astonishing landscapes that circumnavigate the globe, and a dizzying mix of historical periods, provide a backdrop for the little girl at the film's centre. Breillat's cinematographic eye has rarely been expressed on such a large canvas or with such razor-sharp intent."

Noah Cowan, Toronto International Film Festival.

DIRECTOR

Catherine Breillat

SCREENPLAY

Catherine Breillat

CAST

Anastasia (child):

Carla Besnainou

Anastasia (age 16):

Julia Artamonov

Peter: Kerian Mayan

Johan: David Chausse

GENRE

Drama

DISTRIBUTOR

Strand Releasing

RUNNING TIME 82'

PRODUCTION France, 2010

RATING Not Rated

GAUGE Beta SP, Digibeta,

DVCAM, DVD

L'ILLUSIONISTE

The Illusionist



Sylvain Chomet's delightful follow-up to 2003's *The Triplets of Belleville* is another exquisitely animated film, one based on an unproduced script by the French comic genius Jacques Tati (which was given to Chomet by Tati's own daughter). *The Illusionist* is set in the early 1960s, the time when Tati wrote the screenplay after his huge success with *Mon Oncle* (1958). As an homage to the source material, Chomet's title character is the spitting image of Tati and is given his real name, Tatischeff. This middle-aged, slightly stoop-shouldered magician is upstaged by his rabbit during performances in Paris; at his shows in London, the illusionist can't begin to compete with a wildly popular proto-Beatles band. But he finds far more appreciative audiences in small pubs in Scotland—and makes a devoted teenage friend, Alice, a poor cleaning girl who follows him to Edinburgh. The two form a touching father-daughter bond, with the illusionist determined to secretly provide Alice with the nice clothes she so admires—finery that isn't procured through magic, but through a series of funny odd jobs that the conjurer takes. Though neither the magician nor his young charge speak each other's language, *The Illusionist*, like Tati's work, beautifully shows the ways people understand each other nonverbally.

"Here, cinema is envisaged as a magical hall of mirrors in which Chomet can conjure an impossible dance across time and space between himself, the late director who has been his greatest inspiration, and their own respective filmic personae."
Anton Bitel, Sight and Sound.

DIRECTOR

Sylvain Chomet

SCREENPLAY

Sylvain Chomet. Original screenplay by Jacques Tati.

VOICES

The Illusionist:

Jean-Claude Donda

Alice: Eilidh Rankin

French Cinema Manager:

Jean-Claude Donda

AWARDS

Best Animated Feature - *César Awards* (2011)

Best Animated Film - *New York Film Critics Circle* (2010)

GENRE

Animation

DISTRIBUTOR

Sony Pictures Classics

RUNNING TIME 80'

PRODUCTION France, UK, 2010

RATING PG (for thematic elements and smoking)

GAUGE 35mm, Blu-ray, DVD