

LE GAMIN AU VELO

Een film van Jean-Pierre et Luc Dardenne

België · 84 min · 2011 · Drama

Cyril is bijna twaalf en wil maar één ding: zijn vader terugvinden die hem in een kindertehuis heeft gestopt. Tijdens zijn zoektocht ontmoet hij Samantha. Ze runt een kapperszaak en is bereid om hem in het weekend in huis te nemen. Cyril beseft nog niet dat Samantha echt om hem geeft, maar heeft haar liefde nodig om zijn te woede sussen.



In Officiële Competitie voor het Cannes Film Festival 2011

Release datum: 21 juli 2011

Distributie: Cinéart

Meer informatie:

Publiciteit & Marketing: Cinéart

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Persrubriek inlog: cinéart / wachtwoord: film

CAST

Samantha	Cécile de France
Cyril	Thomas Doret
Guy Catoul	Jérémie Renier
Le libraire	Fabrizio Rongione
Wes	Egon Di Mateo

Met de medewerking van Olivier Gourmet

CREW

Directors	Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne
1 st Assistant Directors	Caroline Tambour
Director Photography	Alain Marcoen (s.b.c.)
Camera Operator	Benoit Dervaux
First Assistant Camera	Amaury Duquenne
Editor	Marie-Hélène Dozo
Sound Engineer	Jean-Pierre Duret
Sound Editor	Benoit De Clerck
Sound Mixer	Thomas Gauder
Set Designer	Igor Gabriel
Costume Designer	Maïra Ramedhan-Levi
Make up	Natali Tabareau-Vieuille
Location Manager	Philippe Groff
Production Manager	Thomas Alfandari
Stills Photographer	Christine Plenus
Producers	Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, Denis Freyd
Executive Producer	Delphine Tomson
Coproducer	Andrea Occhipinti
Associate Producers	Arlette Zylberberg, Bernadette Meunier, André Michotte, Stefano Massenzi

A Les Films du Fleuve, Archipel 35, Lucky Red, France 2 Cinéma, RTBF (Belgian Television), Belgacom coproduction.

Produced with the help of Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la Communauté Française de Belgique and of VOO, of the Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée, of EURIMAGES, with the participation of CANAL +, CINÉCINÉMA, FRANCE TÉLÉVISIONS, of the Région Wallonne (Wallimage), Artémis Productions, the Tax Shelter of the Belgian Federal Government, Taxshelter.be, Inver Invest, Casa Kafka Pictures, Casa Kafka Pictures Movie Tax Shelter empowered by Dexia and Making Of, in association with Wild Bunch and Soficinéma 7, with the support of the MEDIA Programme of the European Union.

International Sales: Wild Bunch.

DIRECTORS JEAN-PIERRE AND LUC DARDENNE

Jean-Pierre Dardenne was born in Engis, Belgium, in April 1951.

Luc Dardenne was born in Awirs, Belgium, in March 1954.

They have directed numerous documentaries.

In 1975, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne created Dérives, the production company that has produced some sixty documentaries.

In 1994, they set up the production company Les films du fleuve.

Selected Filmography

1987 Falsch

with Bruno Cremer

1992 Je pense à vous

with Fabienne Babe, Robin Renucci

1996 The Promise

with Jérémie Renier, Olivier Gourmet, Assita Ouédraogo

1999 Rosetta

with Emilie Dequenne, Fabrizio Rongione,

Anne Yernaux, Olivier Gourmet

Palme d'Or and Award for Best Actress for Emilie Dequenne

Cannes Film Festival 1999

2002 The Son

with Olivier Gourmet, Morgan Marinnie, Isabella Soupart

Award for Best Actor for Olivier Gourmet

Cannes Film Festival 2002

2005 The Child

with Jérémie Renier, Déborah François, Jérémie Ségard

Palme d'Or – Cannes Film Festival 2005

2008 Lorna's Silence

with Artta Dobroshi, Jérémie Renier, Fabrizio Rongione

Award for Best Screenplay – Cannes Film Festival 2008

Lumiere Award for Best French Language Film 2009

INTERVIEW WITH JEAN –PIERRE AND LUC DARDENNE

How did “The Kid with a Bike” come about?

Luc: We’d had the story in our heads for a long time: a woman who helps a boy emerge from the violence that holds him prisoner. The first image was this kid, this ball of nerves, pacified and soothed thanks to another human being.

Jean-Pierre: First we imagined Samantha as a doctor but we changed our minds and decided she was going to be a hairdresser, settled in her neighbourhood for a long time.

The film is very moving without ever falling into sentimentality.

Jean-Pierre: Thank goodness!

Luc: We were adamant that the audience would never find out why Samantha is drawn to Cyril. We didn’t want psychological explanations. We didn’t want the past to explain the present. We wanted the audience to think: “She is doing this!” Which is plenty already.

Cyril is always on the move. He’s restless.

Jean-Pierre: Yes, he’s often on his bike... This kid without any ties runs after love without knowing it.

Child-parent relationships often feature in your films: “The Promise”, “The Child”, “The Son”. Why?

Luc: We are all “sons of” and “daughters of”...

Jean-Pierre: Society makes stars of the individual. Perhaps it’s as a reaction to this that we keep coming back to the notion of a link. Even if it isn’t always biological, as with Samantha and Cyril...

Despite the violence of Cyril’s story the film has a bright side.

Jean-Pierre: Yes, we have tried to find some fluidity, something tangible in the direction. We filmed in the summer, which is a first for us.

Is kindness difficult to film?

Luc: On the face of it, evil is always more exciting (laughs). It was very important that we shouldn’t portray a clichéd kindness, of course, but that we stick as closely as possible to this feeling of openness and exchange.

Jean-Pierre: Filming a character who has someone else’s best interests at heart hasn’t often happened to us. Shooting in the summer helped us give the film a certain brightness and softness. And Cécile de France conveys these qualities naturally.

It is unusual for you to work with renowned actors.

Luc: Nothing was programmed. We never write with a specific actor in mind. As soon as we finished the screenplay we started to think about actresses and about Cécile first. With her we knew we'd avoid all psychology... that her body and her face were enough.

We gave her the screenplay and she accepted right away. She asked us a few questions regarding the motivations of her character. We told her Samantha was there, end of story. She trusted us.

She seems to have rediscovered her Belgian accent...

Jean-Pierre: Yes! We were very careful with the accent. We didn't want the "the French actress has arrived!" effect. Cécile is Belgian, let's not forget that. She grew up not too far from where the film takes place, in the Meuse Valley, but her accent is slight and we didn't want to overemphasize it.

How did you find Thomas Doret, the boy who plays Cyril, and is almost always on screen?

Jean-Pierre: The usual way when you're looking for actors of his age: we put an ad in the papers then held a casting of about a hundred kids. Thomas came on the first day, he was the fifth one we saw and it clicked right away.

Luc: Right from the start we were struck by the expression in his eyes, his stubborn air, his look of concentration...

Jean-Pierre: He also had an astonishing ability to learn his lines... and he had a lot of them. From the first trials - which in fact are the opening scene of the film - we felt that he was the character. He had an intuitive understanding of his part. Something immediately accurate and poignant, without ever snivelling.

Luc: He was the only one who was there consistently during the six weeks of rehearsal. He found himself in the position of the leader! He already knew all the scenes by heart even though we hadn't yet asked him at that stage. And when he got it wrong, he'd get really mad. Thomas is a brown belt in karate! It helps him with his concentration and his memory.

Two of your regulars also make an appearance: Olivier Gourmet, and Jérémie Renier, in the difficult role of the father.

Luc: Olivier just pops in, we had to find something for him to do! (laughs) We proposed him three options and he chose to play the cafe owner who serves the beers. It's only a small scene but it's important to us that he's there.

Jean-Pierre: Jérémie's part is meatier. Once he finished reading the screenplay and discovered his character he immediately told us that we'd found yet another lovely part for him to play! (laughs) But he plays the nice guys in other people's films so..

How did you write the screenplay? How long did it take?

Jean-Pierre: One year in all, with a few breaks. But we had discussed it at length beforehand.

Luc: We start with one character, one situation, and we take notes of everything that we find interesting. Then comes the structure, then a first draft, then another, then another... It takes us months.

And the shoot?

Luc: 55 days. With short nights. But we never worked after 1:30am... maybe once. We were filming with a 13-year-old boy. We were very prepared. We've never rehearsed so much before a shoot.

In "The Kid with a Bike" we have a city but also the forest that borders it...

Luc: We imagined a geographical triangle for this film: the city, the forest and the gas station. The forest is a place of dangerous attractions for Cyril, the place where he can learn how to become a crook. The city embodies the past with his father, and the present with Samantha. The gas station is a place of transition, where the plot takes numerous new turns.

Jean-Pierre: We wanted to construct the film as a kind of fairy tale, with baddies who make the boy lose his illusions, and Samantha, who appears as a kind of fairy. For a short while we even thought of calling the film "A Fairytale For Our Times".

For once you use music, even though sparingly...

Luc: It's very rare in our films and we hesitated for a long time. In a fairytale there has to be a development, with emotions and new beginnings. It seemed to us that music, at certain points, could act like a calming caress for Cyril.

You're back in Cannes again, where you have already won two Palmes d'Or ("Rosetta" in 1999 and "The Child" in 2005). What does the festival mean to you?

Jean-Pierre: It's very important that we show our films here. It's lovely to come back each time. We love the adrenalin rush that you only get in Cannes.

Luc: Our cinema owes a lot to this festival. Our story continues here, a happy one so far...

INTERVIEW WITH CECILE DE FRANCE

What was your first reaction once you finished reading the screenplay of “The Kid with a Bike”?

The Dardennes write so well that I immediately saw the film... The power of simplicity is what nonsensest best defines their work. This story of a young boy who wants to find his father needs no demonstrative effect. The intensity is subterranean; it rests on suggestion. The cinema of the two brothers doesn't give lessons, it refuses black and white interpretation and emotional blackmail. The screenplay was proof of that. And I just loved it.

How did the brothers presented Samantha to you?

They don't like psychological explanations. Samantha is benevolent, radiant, but the Dardenne immediately made it clear to me that I should never overdo it in the sweetness department! They told me this film was a kind of modern tale and that my job was to represent a woman who is a mixture of kindness and strength and whose motivations remain unknown. At first Cyril isn't so much attracted by Samantha as by the possibility she offers of finding his father. Cyril is the central character. Samantha is at his service. And I had to serve the story.

Frustrating?

Absolutely not! I like to be of service! And I really liked the fact that I had to forget certain actors' habits. I had to put my ego aside. With the Dardennes anyway, you have to put aside all forms of crap... Forget all about an “actor's performance”! Belgians have a “No to glamour!” attitude. “No to the star system!”, “All for the story!”. That's fine by me.

Have you wanted to work with them for a long time?

Yes. I love the way they show real life and our society. The Dardenne Brothers *are* Belgium! They film our country with such subtlety. I was truly honoured that they invited me into their world. The more singular the directors' world is, the more it enriches me.

Did you get much from the month of preparation before shooting?

A huge amount! An actor always wants to fight for his character, to make the most of it. I would have tended to make Samantha sweeter. The rehearsals allowed the brothers to help me play down the maternal side. It was all about developing neutrality... a lot of work. We rehearsed for over a month, on the actual sets, in costume. No comparison with the handful of read-throughs I'm used to. The brothers enjoy searching and like to take their time. And I liked that too.

How did you find working with your co-star Thomas Doret, who is only 13?

The Dardenne brothers are really good at making everyone feel equal. I never felt like the “experienced actor”. Thomas spent even more time than me rehearsing so in fact he was ahead of the game. His being new at acting gave him some advantages. He was able to find the spontaneity of his character much quicker than I. He didn't have to erase his previous experiences.

Has this experience changed the way you look at cinema?

Restraint is much more a part of my range now. I want to continue to create and invent but learning how not to do so was such a rich experience.

Here you are in competition in Cannes again...

The first time was in 2006 for “The Singer” by Xavier Giannoli. I have such fond memory of that giant screen, the atmosphere... I’m particularly proud to come back to Cannes for “The Kid with a Bike” which is part of a cinema genre I love most of all. A film that helps us understand the world we live in does us good.

FILMOGRAPHY CECILE DE FRANCE

The Kid with a Bike - Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne

A Butterfly Kiss - Karine Silla

Hereafter - Clint Eastwood

Gardiens de l'ordre - Nicolas Boukhrief

Soeur Sourire - Stijn Coninx

Mesrine: Killer Instinct - Jean-François Richet

Où est la main de l'homme sans tête - Guillaume and Stéphane Malandrin

The Colonel - Laurent Herbiet

Gone for a Dance - Alain Berliner

Un secret - Claude Miller

Orchestra Seats - Danièle Thompson

The Singer - Xavier Giannoli

Bad Faith - Roschdy Zem

Russian Dolls - Cédric Klapisch

Around the World in Eighty Days - Franck Coraci

I, Cesar - Richard Berry

La confiance règne - Etienne Chatiliez

Switchblade Romance - Alexandre Aja

Pot Luck - Cédric Klapisch

a + pollux - Luc Pagès

Irene - Ivan Calbérac

L'art (délicat) de la séduction - Richard Berry

Regarde-moi (en face) - Marco Nicoletti

Toutes les nuits - Eugène Green

THOMAS DORET

Born in December 1996, "The Kid with a Bike" is his first screen appearance.

JEREMIE RENIER

Filmography :

The Kid with a Bike - Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne

Philibert - Sylvain Fusée

Possessions - Eric Guirado

Potiche - François Ozon

Pièce Montée - Denys Granier-Deferre

Demain dès l'aube - Denis Dercourt

The Vintner's Luck - Niki Caro

Lorna's Silence - Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne

Summer Hours - Olivier Assayas

In Bruges - Martin McDonagh

Coupable - Lætitia Masson

Atonement - Joe Wright

Private Property - Joachim Lafosse

President - Lionel Delplanque

Dikkenek - Olivier van Hoofstadt

Fair Play - Lionel Bailliu

The Child - Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne

Cavalcade - Steve Suissa

Le pont des arts - Eugène Green

San Antonio - Frédéric Auburtin

Work Hard, Play Hard - Jean-Marc Moutout

En territoire indien - Lionel Epp

Le troisième œil - Christophe Fraipont

The War in Paris - Yolande Zauberman

The Pornographer - Bertrand Bonello

Brotherhood of the Wolf - Christophe Gans

Pretend I'm Not Here - Olivier Jahan

The King's Daughters - Patricia Mazuy

Criminal Lovers - François Ozon

The Promise - Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne