

Persmap



UN HOMME À LA HAUTEUR

Een film van Laurent Tirard

De charmante Alexandre (Jean Dujardin) zoekt contact met de jonge en succesvolle advocate Diane (Virginie Efira) als hij haar mobieltje heeft gevonden. Ze spreken af elkaar de volgende dag te ontmoeten. Het wordt de dag waarop Diane's leven voorgoed verandert. Alexandre bezorgt haar een fantastische date en doet er vervolgens alles aan haar hart te veroveren. Maar Diane wordt door Alexandre geconfronteerd met het ideaalbeeld dat zij van een man heeft. Kan ze zich over haar verwachtingen van de grote liefde heen zetten?

UN HOMME À LA HAUTEUR is de nieuwste romantische komedie van Laurent Tirard (LE PETIT NICOLAS, MOLIÈRE). Het is een feel-good voorjaarsfilm die zichzelf de vraag stelt hoe wij denken dat liefde eruit ziet.



Speelduur: 100 min. - Land: Frankrijk - Jaar: 2016 - Genre: Romantische komedie
Release datum bioscoop: 12 mei 2016
Distributie: Cinéart

Meer informatie over de film:

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Cast

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Alexander | Jean Dujardin |
| Diane | Virginie Efira |
| Bruno | Cédric Kahn |
| Coralie | Stéphanie Papanian |
| Benji | César Domboy |
| Monique | Edmonde Franchi |
| Nicole | Manoëlle Gaillard |
| Philippe | Bruno Gomila |

Crew

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| Regisseur | Laurent Tirard |
| Scenario | Grégoire Vigneron Laurent Tirard |
| Script | Isabelle Perrin-Thevenet |
| Cinematografie | Jérôme Alméras |
| Decor | Françoise Dupertuis |
| Kostuumdesign | Valérie Artiges-Corno |
| Soundtrack | Eric Neveux |
| Geluid | Eric Devulder François Fayard Thomas Gauder Agathe Hassenforder |
| Eerste regie-assistent | Matthieu de la Mortriere |
| Montage | Valérie Deseine |
| Visuele effecten | Alain Carsoux |
| Productiedirecteur | François Hamel |
| Producenten | VVZ Production M6 films Gaumont |
| In samenwerking met | Sain Sebastien Froissart Creative Andina Scope Pictures Matthias Ehrenberg |
| Mede mogelijk gemaakt door | CANAL + M6 CINE + Région Provence –Alpes – Côtes d’Azur |
| Distributie in Frankrijk | Gaumont Distribution |

Regisseur Laurent Tirard

Laurent Tirard studeerde film aan de New York University, werkte als scriptschrijver voor Warner Bros studios en werd toen journalist en werkte voor het Franse filmtijdschrift Studio voor zes maanden. Hier voerde hij een serie van interviews aan over het maken van films. Deze serie is gepubliceerd als een boek onder de titel *Moviemakers' Master Class: Private Lessons from the World's Foremost Directors*. Tijdens het interviewen van hen en 16 andere aanzienlijke filmmakers vond Tirard opvallende overeenkomsten tussen de schijnbaar verschillende regisseurs. Het boek is ook gepubliceerd in Frankrijk, Canada, Engeland, Italië, Spanje en Brazilië. In 1997 heeft hij het tijdschrift verlaten en is hij begonnen met het schrijven van scripts voor film en televisie, terwijl hij twee korte films regisseerde in 1999 en 2000. Tirard debuteerde met de korte speelfilm *DE SOURCE SÛRE*. Zijn eerste grote succes kwam in 2006 met de film *PRÊTE-MOI TA MAIN*.



MOLIÈRE (2007) was genomineerd voor een César in de categorie Beste Scenario. Voor zijn film *LE PETIT NICOLAS* (2009) is Tirard meerdere malen genomineerd, onder andere voor een César voor beste adaptatie en de Publieksprijs voor Beste film bij de European Film Awards.

Filmografie:

2016 UN HOMME À LA HAUTEUR
2014 LES VACANCES DU PETIT NICOLAS
2012 ASTERIX & OBELIX BIJ DE BRITTEN (3D)
2009 LE PETIT NICHOLAS
2007 MOLIÈRE
2006 PRÊTE-MOI TA MAIN
2005 TÊTE DE GONDOLE
2005 À CONSOMMER FROID DE PRÉFÉRENCE
2005 LA PAUSE
2004 MENSONGES ET TRAHISONS ET LIS SI AFFINITÉS...
2000 DEMAIN EST UN AUTRE JOUR
1999 DE SOURCE SÛRE

Interview met de regisseur Laurent Tirard

What was the origin of the idea for *Up for Love*?

A few days before the release of *Nicholas on Holiday*, I met Vanessa Van Zuylen, the producer who had bought the right to *Corazón de León*, an Argentinean film by Marcos Carnevale that tells the story of a pretty woman's love for a charming man... who measures 4 foot 7. It was a huge success in 2013 in its country of origin, but never came out anywhere else. Vanessa wanted me to do the remake, but I already had something else in the works. I said I would look at it, just to be polite, sure that I would decline her proposal. Except when I saw it the next morning, I was captivated by the movie. It had a real subject, it was powerful, audacious and unexpected. I immediately saw the real emotional potential of the comedy. Since the film was typically "South American", it was a real tearjerker - a lot like a telenovela - and I thought it would be a good idea to rewrite it and Europeanize it a little.

Did you immediately call your co-screenwriter Grégoire Vigneron ?

Yes. Like me, he loved the story right away and saw its real potential. So we started writing in the summer of 2014, with the idea of shooting it in the autumn. At first, we thought that all we would have to do was to adapt the story to French society. But when I see the original today, I realize that we did make a lot of changes. By dint of detail after detail, *Up for Love* is not really the same film.

Is there a big difference between writing a remake and adapting a comic book, like you did with *Asterix* or *Little Nicholas*?

Yes, because first of all, a comic book is not meant to become a film. Adapting *Asterix* or *Little Nicholas* ultimately left us a lot more freedom. This time, there already was a film, and what's more, a good film. That was more of an inhibition, because we were afraid of being less good than the original.

Have you ever met anyone so little?

Not only did we meet some, we needed a 4 foot 7 stand-in for Jean. We used him for all our angles from behind. He was on location every day and Jean spent a lot of time with him. It was nice to have his view of the film, because we had a lot of situations that he had lived through. But the idea wasn't to make a documentary about Little People; it was to talk about serious things with a light touch. And we wanted to maintain some poetic distance, so that the film would always remain a comedy.

At what time did you think that Jean Dujardin would do *Up for Love*?

Once we had delivered the screenplay, we began to think about casting and we figured: "let's be crazy, let's offer it to Jean Dujardin!" We learned from the original (carried by an Argentinean star), that reducing a famous actor who has a certain sex appeal and obvious charisma to 4 foot 7, would contribute to the jubilatory feel of the film. Jean accepted within 24 hours. And since it amused him a lot too, we waited until he was free and postponed the shoot until spring 2015. Jean is a workaholic, very professional and rigorous. When you see him in *Brice de Nice* or *OSS 117*, you see that he is capable of going over the top, but my idea was to push him toward more reserve and sobriety, to endow the film with more emotion. I discovered that he has very good instincts. Whenever we discussed the screenplay or casting choices, he truly impressed me.

Did you find the actress who was to play Diane quickly too?

No, I had a hard time picturing the character. And so I opted for what is rather rare in France: I asked several actresses to audition. There were some well-known actresses, some less well-known, but they all went along with it. I didn't know Virginie Efira very well and I hadn't seen many of her films. But during her audition, she struck me as the obvious choice. She has an impressive flair for comedy, and plays her scenes with a rare subtlety. Virginie is also a workhorse. She says she has a complex about

her Belgian origins, and her past as a TV anchorwoman, but I discovered an intelligent, extremely cultivated and clever woman.

How did you choose the other actors?

It went very fast with my casting director. Cédric Kahn, who plays Diane's ex-husband, had never played comedy, but I was sure that he would be perfect in the role. It was the same with César Domboy: I had total confidence.

You play a cameo role in the film. Was that fun?

Not at all. I didn't like acting and I don't think I'll ever do it again. But I figured that it would make my kids laugh and I wasn't wrong there.

On set, do you leave room for improvisation?

Very little, but there are two or three moments in the film where I left the cameras on and let the actors play. The entire dinner scene in the clandestine restaurant was improvised, for example. We had written some dialogues but, on the spur of the moment, I wanted Jean and Virginie to feel free. Something magical happens there, because it feels very light. And the same goes for the sequence in which she offers him a pretty ugly sweater. Jean's reaction looks sincere, authentic. It almost looks real.

What was the atmosphere like during the shoot?

Studious, but cheerful. It was a lot of work, but Jean and Virginie were able to lighten the mood. And then we were filming in Marseille, a city I didn't know, but that I immediately fell in love with.

Why did you choose Marseille as a decor?

I didn't want the story to take place in a big megalopolis like Paris or London, because you see so many kinds of people there that even a 4 foot 7 man would go unnoticed. But we needed a big city, and I wanted some sun, to give the story a somewhat Californian feel. I fell in love with Marseille on first sight. It has that chaotic, shambolic look of Paris in the 70s. Seeing people on scooters without helmets has a romantic feel. And in a world that is increasingly uniform and aseptic, Marseille comes as a breath of fresh air.

Some scenes take place at the Opera de Liège. Was that to bring a touch of romanticism to the story too?

In the Argentinean film, the hero was also an architect, but we never see what he does. Grégoire and I wanted to show him at work. And a few months earlier I had seen *Cathedrals of Culture* on Arte, a magnificent documentary produced by Wim Wenders. One of the episodes was about the Oslo Opera, which exuded a wonderful atmosphere. That inspired me to film meetings with the hero, dancers and clowns in the background to give the film a poetic ambience. But for questions of rights, we filmed in an old railway station transformed into an opera house for the film.

In *Up for Love*, we see some of the codes of romantic comedy. Which films inspired you?

I was inspired by Capra, because he too flirted with fairy tales and he had a kindly view of people. He never showed any wickedness, just a lot of humanity. But having been brought up on American and English romantic comedies, I admit that there is also some *Pretty Woman* in there – for the modern fairy tale aspect – and a little of *Bridget Jones*, with pratfalls during the most intensely romantic scenes.

For this film, you needed several special effects. Is that a part of the job that fascinates you?

I had had my fill on *Astérix*, and it isn't necessarily what I enjoy most about the job. But they were indispensable in *Up for Love*, and I have to say that ultimately it wasn't all that complicated. We did as many special effects during the shoot as in post-production. It wasn't enough just to reduce the character, because then he would have had a little head and little hands, and would have looked weird

in close up. And he wasn't supposed to have the morphology of a little person. But the many tests we did before the shoot allowed for the right proportions and to check which techniques would work.

What kind of effects were you able to do?

It could be as simple as filming Jean on his knees (framing him at shoulder level) or forcing perspectives (placing him farther back so that he would look smaller), or more complicated, like in the scene in the office, when Jean is interrupted by Cédric and has to jump from the chair. For that shot, we had to raise the room 40 cm, except for the spot where Jean lands. But all that was in fact very artisanal.

Did you know from the start what kind of music you wanted?

I thought of Emilie Gassin very early on, who had done a superb acoustic version of *Freed from desire* during the first part of a Renan Luce concert. Since she had not yet brought out an album, I asked her to send me some demos and I listened to them while writing *Up for Love*. That is when I thought that her songs could punctuate the film, like Aimee Mann in *Magnolia*.

What did you think when you saw the finished film?

That I had made my first adult film! There is some personal experience and baggage in it. And it's the first time I allowed myself to go a little further into emotions. It was a challenge and it's what I'm most proud of until today.



Interview met de Jean Dujardin

What attracted you to this adventure?

Theoretically, this kind of comedy is not my style, but I was curious about how I could play it technically. Then I said to myself, that this might be the only time in my life when I could measure 4 foot 7 and I was charmed by the idea of playing a rather perfect little person who does not inspire mockery or ridicule.

How did you approach your character, Alexandre?

I immediately asked Laurent how he was going to proceed. I understood that this was not to be a comedy, but a romance or a fairy tale about a beautiful woman and a little frog. So I had to play my character straight, neither as a wise guy nor sarcastic. As Virginie did too. In fact our job was not to be funny, we were supposed to tell a love story and that's that. I also had to play on my knees, look up at Virginie, dance alone, talk alone... it was hard but interesting. The comedy in the film comes from the second roles, like the ex-husband, the mother or the secretary, who watch and judge us.

Did you intellectualize his difference to embody him?

No, because I acted on the principle that in his head, Alexandre isn't little: he's actually a big man (a big little man) who has a good life, a good job, a big house. In fact, he's larger than life. But I did however intellectualize the problems it could cause for my stand in, Brice, who does measure 4 foot 7. He spoke to me about the difficulty of being that different. But I didn't want to play a complainer. I wanted my character to come across as an optimist. And when I had to play a little sad, I checked with Brice that my character's sadness didn't look too phony. Because he has a certain reserve, and he also has his pride, and I didn't want to betray that. I really wanted to stay true-to-life.

What did this character teach you about yourself?

He made me feel humble (laughter). When you suddenly measure 4 foot 7, and you play on your knees, or on a chair, you become modest. But that height also modifies the way you look at things. It's like seeing the world from a child's height again. But this film does not speak only to people who are short, it speaks to all those who have complexes. And that is very interesting.

There is a nice relationship between Alexandre and his son. Do you like playing fathers?

Yes, even if it does remind me that I'm growing old! But I accept it, because I have to find new roles for myself. If you have children who are 15-16 years old in real life, it's not hard to play. And with César Domboy, there was instant complicity. Like a lot of actors of his generation, he's a smart kid. He works fast.

What do you like about Laurent Tirard?

His cinema is elegant, and he prevents you from going overboard. It's streamlined, and very constructed: it's pleasant to be a part of. Tirard doesn't talk a lot, but when he gives you an indication or makes a remark, it's always on the money. I like that about him: instead of acting like your bosom buddy, slapping you on the back, he draws you into his universe. I love his silences and his reserve. He doesn't have an oversized ego: he knows what he wants: he wants to travel, to have fun, and to try new things. And that's exactly how I conceive of my career.

And your partner, Virginie Efira ?

I've known her for a long time in real life, and so playing with her was both pleasant and self-evident. I had great confidence in her, so all I had to do was let myself go. Virginie never acts up, she's in it for the pleasure. She's intelligent, and she never get upset: she laughs at herself and thinks with you, without ever giving the impression that she's working. It's very pleasant to act with someone, without

having to wonder what they think of you, if they're going to feel tired or really into it. Virginie is not the kind of actress who brings her personal problems to the set. She has the elegance of always being there to serve the project. Besides, she's the one who carries the film: there's something radiant about her. She's no longer the Meg Ryan she was when she was starting out; she's grown beyond the girl next door. Virginie is now a beautiful woman looked at by men and liked by women. She has that attractive kind of aura, as it becomes clearer from film to film.

Do you like to improvise?

I do, but you can't do it with everyone. Good improvisation is done with a good comrade. It makes your day crazier when it works. But on this film, I was very well behaved, because I didn't want my character to come across as a loudmouth.

What was the atmosphere like on the shoot?

It was very studious and very technical. In any event, it's the kind of adventure you embark on knowing that you're in for delayed-action pleasure, because it's complicated to make. Complicated for the director who's directing actors against a green screen, but also for the actors, who feel isolated because they're not playing together ... it's hard for everyone in fact. However that may be, it was a first for this kind of film and I'm happy to have set foot on this *terra incognita*, because that's what I like about this profession most.

What did you think when you saw the film?

I found it very gentle, very sensitive, and very elegant. Where other directors may have run riot, Laurent avoided that pitfall and always remained sober. It is not pure comedy, but it's the first time I feel I've participated in a film whose family audience potential is so strong.



Interview met de Virginie Efira

What attracted you to this project?

Even before they offered it to me, I had heard some talk about the project, and it intrigued me quite a lot. I thought that the idea of a woman who fantasizes about a man she doesn't know, before discovering that he measures 4 foot 7, and who finds herself torn between love and a kind of social embarrassment, was an excellent subject for comedy. And truly original. And the fact that Laurent Tirard would be directing, and a shrunken Jean Dujardin playing the character, made the project all the more exciting and special. I knew Laurent Tirard and his work, so I knew that he had taste and high standards, whether as regards form or content... and Jean Dujardin, because I always thought that he played with a crazy kind of freedom. So I went in for an audition, and we started out together. I met the producer. It was her first production. She was unusually enthusiastic, and that was infectious. I think that she had a lot to do with the energy on this shoot. And then of course, there was the screenplay by Laurent Tirard and Grégoire Vigneron, who were able to preserve a kind of narrative simplicity, without sacrificing the complexity of the characters, even if it is a comedy. The subject is funny, but at the same time I find the issue of the very intimate view we have of each other, and the view society has of us, very universal and interesting. When are we really free in the choices we make? Does the way others look at us influence our own feelings?



How did you approach the character of Diane?

I didn't watch the original film because it would have limited my acting to a particular style. To do something new, I needed to let my imagination run wild, to forget about moral values, to understand this woman with her good points and her flaws. I had to forget about archetypes of the strong female, to give Diane a human consistency. For that, I worked a lot on the text and each time I didn't understand one of her reactions, I looked for a way of putting some of myself into it to own the situation totally. My main challenge was to bring a kind of truth to a rather strange postulate, while still respecting the comedy. To believe it, you have to dig deep into the situation and transmute your character into a person of flesh, and blood, and soul.

Did it take you some time to tame Jean Dujardin?

I don't know if it's because we knew each other a little before, but we very soon felt wonderfully complicit. I must say that Jean is very elegant, and he doesn't rank human relations hierarchically. Because in so many ways he still remains childlike, he likes to try out new things, and that helps you to feel free and easy very quickly. In spite of all that, you always need a little time to understand how your partner works. Especially for this film, in which the fundamental elements were so particular:

what I saw was not necessarily what you were going to see in the film. I mean especially those green backgrounds which we are not so used to in France, or scenes in which we are standing, but cannot look each other in the eye. I stared at one of his shirt buttons, and he stared at a cloud over my head when he talked to me. When we played in the street, it was absurd: passersby must have thought we were doing contemporary street art!

Did you feel, when reading the screenplay, that the film would be so romantic?

No, because a film is always the result of what you do together. But I could tell that it was a possibility. And for me to like the project, it had to have that aspect. Laurent quickly put us at ease: if we didn't feel right with some lines, we could suggest something else. In this kind of big film, I wouldn't say you have to make things more muddled, but you need to prevent things from becoming mechanical: respecting nuances, following the other person's eyes to give consistency to your exchanges. Afterwards, the charm works or it doesn't: it's not something that you can control.

What kind of director is Laurent Tirard?

He's not the kind of angst-ridden cineaste who drowns you in information or questions. Laurent is stingy with words, and when he says something to you, it's never in vain. That feeds your confidence enormously. But it's good to have different ways of functioning, because that is what prevents actors from creating a method and limiting themselves to it. Sometimes I need to understand something, sometimes not. Then I just need to remain in sync with all the various elements. I always try to avoid comfort zones: when everything is working in a film, you need to create some tiny imperfections.

Do you like to improvise?

I don't much believe in improvisation. Actors can end up listening to themselves speak, and I don't like actors taking over on set. What's nice is to improvise in a framework. At times that reveals a sub-text. In the dinner scene, for example, Laurent left us very free. I didn't feel very comfortable with the funny stories they were telling. Personally I hate jokes, and we went to town with them in that scene. The same goes for the breakup scenes, for which Laurent accepted suggestions before shooting, so that the actors would feel as close as possible to what they were playing. I also like Jean's reserve a lot. He always maintained a kind of dignity for his character. In emotional scenes, he never goes overboard, and that also influences what you may suggest.

You have a real feel for comedy. Do you know where it comes from?

No, I don't quite know where it can come from, but I don't really think I have much of a comic nature. I'm not Valerie Lemerrier or Jacqueline Mailland, even if I wish I were. I asked my mother if I was funny when I was a little girl. She thought it over for 15 seconds, and just said ... No. That was a laugh. But there is something absurd about taking everything so seriously, when we know how we're all going to end up... And so humor, wit seems to be the only defense that works! I don't know how to get along with people who have no sense of humor, and in the movies, I have a real love for comedy. Comedies that manage to blend lightness and depth. That's the supreme elegance!

Romantic comedy suits you. What do you like about that genre?

I like people in movement, who change, who look for life, or at least, the *élan vital*. At the movies, the easiest, and perhaps most beautiful way of showing that is by two people meeting and falling in love. It makes you topple over into the other person's codes, it enlarges your perception of the world, and it also weakens you. It's exciting to play... Especially since in real life you can't experience that 1000 times, otherwise it no longer has any meaning! There was something I liked about Diane's late emancipation. And I also like to subvert apple pie and motherhood. Loving someone who is different isn't easy. Freeing yourself of prescriptive norms is not self-evident for everyone. I like the shame she can feel, the shame we may feel for her, and then the shame of even having had such a thought. I like all the things it makes her go through.

What did this character teach you about yourself?

A character always teaches you something about yourself. In an approach which is not intellectual, but sensitive. There is something a little cut-and-dried about Diane at the beginning of the film, she feels cramped in her existence and doesn't know how to open things up. As if she wanted others' approval before acting. That kind of submission rings a bell with me. It reminds me of things I've gone through and which I obviously used. Trying to break free is not easy, I'm not even sure anyone ever really succeeds, but it can't hurt to try.

What did you think when you saw the film?

That it had a tone, a rhythm, and a truth. I thought my partners were in tune, and moving. And it was fun to see the film with all the special effects. On set, we had an idea of what it would look like, but because the reductions were not always definitive, I was afraid that Jean would come out looking like a Tolkien character. Luckily, he looks a lot more real than that!