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## **SYNOPSIS**

In 1910, Maria Chapdelaine, a girl of seventeen, lives with her family on the banks of the Péribonka River north of Lac Saint-Jean. The Chapdelaines work tirelessly to push back the limits of the forest. In a home where even physical exhaustion cannot diminish the warmth of family life, Maria, strong and full of hope, finds herself faced with major dilemmas. François Paradis, a former neighbour she has loved since childhood, who has become a free-spirited fur trapper and a guide for strangers, promises to return in the spring to marry her. But when the spring is overdue, two suitors come forward. Lorenzo Surprenant, who works in the factories of Massachusetts, offers Maria a comfortable existence in an American city, and Eutrope Gagnon, their valiant neighbour, asks her to clear with him the land he has taken near the Chapdelaines'. Thrust into the adult world; Maria will suddenly be forced to decide of her future as a woman.

## INSPIRED BY THE WORK OF LOUIS HÉMON

*Maria Chapdelaine*, written in 1913 by Louis Hémon was first published as a serial in the newspaper Le Temps in 1914. In 1921, Grasset published it as the first book of its collection Les Cahiers verts. The novel had the largest circulation for many years and phenomenal success. Tens of millions of copies have been sold worldwide. There are hundreds of editions in more than 25 languages.

The Bibliothèque Québécoise has republished the book with the teaser poster of the film on November 18, 2020.

# AROUND MARIA CHAPDELAINE

Interview with Sébastien Pilote by Marcel Jean

You see, if there had been ten films adapted from the novel, I would have liked to have made the eleventh...

Sébastien Pilote



Since its publication in 1913, *Maria Chapdelaine* has been of continuous interest to filmmakers. After two adaptations produced in France, one by Julien Duvivier in 1934 (with Madeleine Renaud in the title role and Jean Gabin as François Paradis), the other by Marc Allégret in 1950 (with Michèle Morgan), we know that Denys Arcand had the project of directing his own adaptation before Gilles Carle signed his, in 1982, this time with Carole Laure. Therefore, your adaptation is the fourth to see the light of day but also the first by a filmmaker from the region where the action takes place. You were born in 1973, when Quebec literature was blossoming, and by the time you were old enough to read *Maria Chapdelaine*, teenagers were no longer necessarily directed to such a classic. So first, I want to ask you how you discovered the novel?

I first discovered Maria Chapdelaine through Gilles Carle's film. I was about 10 years old. It was the television version. I then saw it several times, but that was a very long time ago. There are elements in the film that certainly marked me as a child, that impressed me. The death of François Paradis, for example. I couldn't understand how anyone could freeze to death lying in the snow. For us, winter was a playground. The snow was not a place to die. It fascinated me. As for the novel, I first read it when I was in college. I probably reread it a little later because I had a project for a short documentary called *Le Complexe d'Eutrope* that didn't come to fruition. I then integrated elements of the novel into Le Vendeur (The Salesman). But it was during the preparation for Le Démantèlement (The Auction) that I really discovered Louis Hémon's book. Gabriel Arcand was living with us on the shores of Lac St-Jean. We were in a cottage that I had been lent in St-Henri-de-Taillon, right next to the area where the novel takes place. In the small library of the cottage, there was only one book. It was Maria Chapdelaine: A History of French Canada. I decided to reread it in my spare time while Gabriel Arcand was training his sheep in St-Coeur-de-Marie. And it was a revelation... It was as if the book, but also the upcoming film, had jumped out at me. I thought, "This is going to be my next project." For me, it was a continuation of the work begun with Le Vendeur and Le Démantèlement. I saw it as a kind of pre-history to Le Démantèlement. Maria was the flip side of Gaby's girls. Maria was Gaby. Any form of restraint, of hesitation that I might have entertained in relation to the other adaptations, namely those of Carle and Duvivier, had just vanished. It seemed completely natural to me, all of a sudden. You see, if there had been ten films adapted from the novel, I would have liked to have made the eleventh... I was under the impression that no one had yet touched what seemed to me to be essential in the novel, that is, its disarming, almost simplistic simplicity, the acuity of the details, but also its sheer strength, its depth. Though it has been interpreted, analyzed, commented on, hijacked, mythologized, under a layer of sediment, this novel was there, intact. We can therefore speak of a real discovery.

### Weren't you afraid that people would say "We already know the story"?

There is something exciting about telling a story that has been told many times. Like a myth, a legend, a tale, a joke. Knowing that many already know the story before they see the film gives me wings. It's very liberating. It's saying, "Look at how I'm going to tell it to you, me, in my way. And maybe then you'll see the story differently." Because this simple story tells several others... The initial story is only a pretext. The story is not the film, the story is not cinema. The story is the beautiful excuse to create cinema. And when we talk about films, generally speaking, we give too much importance to stories, I find. As for Louis Hémon's, the poet and novelist Félix-Antoine Savard said, "The work is broad and deep enough for everyone to put their desires, their dreams, their regrets in it." This novel is therefore an actual invitation to make movies. I say all this, but I often have the feeling that people know more about what has been said about the novel, the myth around it, than the novel itself. I also am often under the impression that those who talk about it have not read it.

### What speaks to you about the title character, Maria?

My mother... When I read Maria Chapdelaine, I see my mother.

While I also recognize my grandparents and my ancestors in the novel - and the place where I grew up - it is my mother that I see in Maria. She stopped attending school in grade 7<sup>th</sup> as she had to take care of her 10 siblings and her grandparents, who lived with them. When Maria says that she would have liked to be a school teacher, that is my mother speaking. They were poor and far from everything. They did not have running water for a long time... They were years behind the people of the city, or even the village, because they were too far away, which allowed me to see into the past, into the old days. It was a time-travelling house. My childhood memories of my grandparents' little house, where they held gatherings of at least 25 people, music with my uncles on the accordion, the wooden man dancing, the world chatting, these are only good memories for me. If some people see misery in them, what dominated was joy. Despite of everything, despite of the injustices, my mother managed to accomplish a lot in her life. She impresses me. She's not impressed by anything. She is a full five feet of willpower. And I think her resilience makes her a rebel. When people say things about Maria that I disagree with, I feel like saying, "You don't know my mom!"

You speak of the book with passion. I guess the first step to adapting a novel is to love it.

They say that translating is the most loving of readings... I would say that adapting is the most loving of readings. Because to adapt is also to translate.

Translating means choosing a vocabulary, reviewing the rhythm of sentences, determining punctuation. To adapt, one must thus determine a style, a tone, a cut-out... What were your main choices?

I was convinced that I had to stick to the simplicity of the story. Not fall into the trap of exacerbating the "love story" with Paradis, for example. I often realized that the bravest thing was to keep it simple... that the complexity would come on its own. Formally and cinematographically speaking, I leaned towards classicism—which I like to revisit - but also melodrama... By borrowing elements from the American "domestic" melodrama where everything is played inside the house while trying to go outside, as in western films. I wanted gaps in this frontier between inside and out - which we associate with women and men respectively - openings between melodrama and western. The heart of the film had to be the house. With its pulse. And its center is the stove that must not be allowed to die. Everything revolves around it. The characters leave, then return to it, like waves following one another. The house has a gravitational force. A power of attraction. Everything around it, I don't show. The cities, the villages, the beautiful parishes, it's all off-screen... The most critical choices are often there, in the things that are not shown. Working from this novel, from this myth, means having an enormous reservoir of images, fetishes, clichés and received ideas, which must be put to good use. It is both a richness and a problem. When you approach genre cinema, for example, you have to know how to work with an extensive reservoir of images and clichés. And that's interesting.

What would be for you the differences between the myth around the novel, what is said about it, and the reading that you make of them?

People read *Maria Chapdelaine* and often talk about it in a funny way. I think we tend to forget this, but what Louis Hémon did was paint portraits, not models. The Catholic Church and the conservatives have given the novel, its characters, the role of models to follow. They used them by hijacking them, by recuperating them, and it is hard today to read the novel - and its characters - without going through this filter. When I say myth, I also mean all the imagery around the story. The imagery of Clarence Gagnon's paintings, for example, idealized, often erroneous, depicting landscapes of Charlevoix rather than Lac-St-Jean. The imagery of the hundreds of editions, not always the most prestigious ones, that also knew how to profit from the author's death. Derivative productions. Sequels. The films too (laughs). To this, we can add the phenomenal popular success that has given the novel an "image."

Everyone "has" to read *Maria Chapdelaine*, which is not very exciting when you want to stand out - it is fashionable to talk about it with contempt, to look down on it, which seems suspicious to me and also contributes to the myth. People like to believe that it is a Quebec novel, when in fact, it is French... Then there is the age of Maria, and her character. This is very important. Maria is not a thirty-year-old woman, or even more... as she has often been shown. She's not a spinster, a saintly, somewhat silly, mystical girl under a pink sky. She is simply a young girl, or a young woman, a teenager of her time, in this particular environment, caught in a world of adults and superstitions. And Louis Hémon... he was not a religious conservative, to the church's service, but rather a liberal, a libertarian adventurer who shunned the petty bourgeoisie, but also... his family. When we repeat, for example, this famous sentence: "In the land of Quebec nothing must die, and nothing must change", we forget that the novel contains a multitude of metamorphoses. We should rather say, nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed—a completely natural and universal law. There is a bit of the revolutionary paradox of Lampedusa and *Le Guépard* in *Maria Chapdelaine*: "If we want everything to stay the way it is, everything has to change." And I find this kind of paradox fascinating! While we want to assign it a fixed character, the novel contains several ambiguities, such as this one. And that's precisely what I wanted to bring out in the film, these ambiguities, which far from being frozen in time, are in motion.

### What are these other ambiguities in motion?

There is, for example, Maria's response to Eutrope at the very end. "The spring after this spring". Whereas Paradis had promised her to come back "in the spring" and never came back... It's very ambiguous, this promise when you think about it. What does it mean? Is she going to marry him, or is it never going to happen? In my films, I always want the viewer to ask himself at the end: "Does it end well or badly?" R. W. Fassbinder said something about Raoul Walsh that I like: "Good directors manage to give you happy endings that leave you feeling unsatisfied"." Then, another beautiful ambiguity, the first sentence of the novel, the incipit *Ite Missa Est*. This sentence at the beginning is quite a program. It is a key to reading it. In this first sentence, everything is said. Or almost.

*Ite Missa Est*, which literally means "The mass is said", it is a bit like having everything played out in advance, right? A bit like Julius Caesar's "*Alea Jacta Est*" ("the die is cast").

Everything is played out in advance in all films, in all novels, right? (Laughs) The *Ite Missa Est*, yes, means that all the games are set, nothing can be changed, there's nothing more to do... It's beautiful and ironic as a starting point - as an opening - I think. But this roundabout meaning of the *Ite Missa Est* appeared at a fairly recent time when people didn't understand Latin anymore. Being the last words of the priest at the very end of the mass, we said to ourselves "the mass is said", then it became "there is nothing more to be done". It has become the fatalistic *formula par excellence*. But in reality, the expression *Ite Missa Est* means "Go, it's the mission". It is therefore, a missionary call. An invitation or a command, I don't know. It's no longer "there's nothing left to do", but "everything is to be done, let's go! ». The contradictory significations are sometimes so rich. It gave me the idea of shooting the opening scene with Paradis, Maria and the priest as if it were a wedding, a wedding ring... when in fact it is the end of the mass, a dismissal. A dismissal that says: there is nothing more to do, everything is to be done.

As opposed to the inherently fixed character that we attribute to the novel, you also spoke of metamorphoses. Are you talking about the seasons?

First, there are the seasons, yes. Summer becomes winter. Winter becomes summer. The standing wood that becomes the fields. Then there are the characters... The mother starts talking like the father when their way of life is attacked, and then ultimately and fatally wishes she'd been a city woman. There is the father who then adopts the mother's grievances, her regrets. There is Eutrope who becomes Paradis by facing the forest alone to fetch the doctor. Then Paradis promises to change into Eutrope, wishing to return home, before disappearing.

Then this same Paradis who had vanished reappears as a ghostly Innu, with wife and child. There is Lorenzo, a local like them, who returns transformed into a worker, a proletarian. And of course, there is Maria who becomes the mother, the head of the family, a bit like Michael Corleone becomes the godfather... That is, having first hoped to do differently.

The figure of the settler is central to the mythology of Quebec cinema, and especially that of Abitibi. One immediately thinks, for example, of the colonization of the "Pays d'en haut" in *Un homme et son péché*, , which has run through our cinematography since *En pays neufs* by Abbé Maurice Proulx (1937), *Les Brûlés* by Bernard Devlin (1959), and the cycle of four films directed by Pierre Perrault that began with *Un royaume vous attend* (1975). Were you aware that you were part of this thematic lineage when you decided to direct *Maria Chapdelaine*?

If I was interested in the settler figure, it was not in relation to those films. There are some films by Pierre Perrault that influenced me, but it wasn't for thematic reasons and it would be more about films like *Pour la suite du monde* and *Les voitures d'eau*. Because they remind me of the atmosphere of my childhood. As for the figure of the colonist, in the rather unique case of French Canada, I find it exciting and rich because the colonist is not quite the colonizer; he didn't have the capital of the Englishman or the power of the Church, nor is he quite the colonized, because he still possessed and mastered his culture, his language, his habits and customs, and his land. The colonist was called the inhabitant. And the inhabitant is, for me, a kind of balancing act between these two other figures, the colonized and the colonizer. He could always tip to one side or the other. He was a kind of in-between, ambiguous, hybrid figure. In my film, the inhabitants are also the social class opposite that of the wage earner with a boss. A class that disappeared throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

When we look at the discourse induced by Maria Chapdelaine's characters, we realize that Eutrope Gagnon embodies the values linked to the ideology of conservation, meaning work, attachment to the land, while Lorenzo Surprenant embodies the appeal of modernity, with its promises of comfort, but also exile, acculturation. Maria must choose between her suitors, and her choice is François Paradis, whose character is elusive and cannot be reduced to either of these archetypes. He is a runner in the woods who would have to settle down in order to get to Maria. What is your conception of this character, of François?

François Paradis is both Eutrope and Lorenzo. He has the familiar character of Eutrope. Like him, he is the old neighbour, the friend of the family. He is like them, he is faithful to them. On the other hand, like Lorenzo, he refused his father's land, he left. He knows travel, he is exoticism and otherness, with his tales from elsewhere. Contrary to what is always said, François Paradis is not a suitor. It is a mistake to consider him as one of the possible choices in my opinion. Because he had "already" been chosen. It is the initial choice if you like. It is the childhood love. Maria has to choose between Eutrope and Lorenzo, because Paradis is not an option since he disappears. He is excluded... He represents the non-choice. He represents Maria's childhood, and the possibility of extending it indefinitely. It is when he disappears that Maria must choose. Paradis' disappearance is the passage to adulthood. Paradis is a kind of Prince Charming, as unreal as the possibility of never choosing. He appears and disappears by magic, elusive. He is linked to the forest and its spirits. Paradis is also the "wild" French Canadian, he is nature. Sort of a link between the WE and the THEM. Paradis makes a promise to Maria, to settle down... to transform himself. He makes the promise of spring. The promise of spring that Maria will, in turn, make at the end of the film.

Do you agree with this way of opposing Eutrope and Lorenzo, the real contenders? Conservatism versus progress?

One should not reduce Eutrope to conservatism, it seems to me. Nor should we see in Lorenzo modernity or a pure and straightforward antagonist. Lorenzo is not progress, but he dreams of it. This opposition between conservatism and modernity, this way of seeing things, comes more from the ideological recovery that the priests have made of the novel by Hémon. Let's say that Eutrope was convenient to them...

It is the French-Canadian peasant culture that Louis Hémon tried to describe. Not conservatism. Eutrope is the inhabitant, the peasant. He is the representative of a social class, which here, as in Europe, was in the process of disappearing. The peasant without a boss and self-sufficient. Without wanting to idealize him, Eutrope nevertheless offers Maria a kind of partnership. He offers her to build, to work with him, without hiding the difficulties from her. He represents a kind of sincerity, the loyalty to oneself. Eutrope's choice is to affirm his truth rather than to accept his fate foolishly. "You will be happy to be the woman you are..." to quote Miron's La Marche à l'amour. On the other hand, Lorenzo proposes to Maria to stop working, to depend entirely on him. He asks her to betray herself in a way. He hides the misery. It's pretty impressive, because all this is in the novel, all Lorenzo offers are promises of consumption, entertainment - things he longs for, dreams about. He announces the middle-class American woman of the Thirty Glorious years, the housewife, the woman of domestic melodramas. Not sure that this modernity is very progressive. It is not sure that the million French-Canadians who went to the United States to be assimilated and to work in miserable conditions, as second- or third-class citizens was progress. But the Catholic religion, the parish priests, had chosen Eutrope, and it was they who made the novel widely known, so it was natural that some progressive, anti-clerical commentators and other enlightened readers chose Lorenzo as their favourite. He was associated with modernity because he dreamed of it. He was then idealized, enriched, gentrified. He is none of that. He is not modern, he is the peasant who becomes a worker. This opposition between conservatism and modernity does not constitute the essence of Maria Chapdelaine, in my opinion. It seems to me that it is a mistake to present the work in such way. That is the work of the priests. For me, the real question, the main opposition, would be more: To survive or to disappear? To stay or to leave? My great-grandfather was American, he had spent his adult life in Massachusetts, and it was not to escape modernity that he came back to Quebec at 28 with his children - including my grandfather. It was to escape the misery in the factories. It was to survive that he returned. Later, he did not want to teach his children English, and it was not against progress. It was because he was afraid they would disappear... "in hell", he said. And he wasn't talking about a holy hell, he was talking about hell on earth.

Hell-or rather the devil - is also very present in the film. Paradis talks about it, says he is not afraid of it...

In the film, the devil is the standing wood. Hell is winter. If the devil divides and separates lovers, hell makes us disappear.

I couldn't help but see a parallel to *Homer's Odyssey* when I saw the film. It was as if Maria was was in Penelope's place and Ulysses did not return. Was this parallel present in your mind?

In her way of postponing her choice, in waiting for the disappeared lover, I did see something of Penelope in Maria. Paradis does not die, he disappears... And if he returns, it will be under a new appearance, transfigured. I like that there remains an uncertainty, I like that there may remain something indeterminate in the disappearance or death - of Paradis. I like that we can even wonder if he existed. He is a spirit. An idea. An invention of Maria's. Maria never gives definitive answers to the suitors, very cleverly. The chapter, entitled "The Departure," opens with Maria maneuvering, looking like a schemer. She weaves backwards, yes, like Penelope she adds springs to spring... That could have been the title of the film: The Springs of Maria Chapdelaine. Not to show Paradis getting lost in the forest, but to use Eutrope's story, is possibly the best idea I had for the adaptation. Paradis departs from the film. We don't see him anymore, but he's still there... floating in the air.

To work from this novel, this myth is to have an enormous reservoir of images, fetishes, clichés and preconceived ideas, which must be put to good use. This is both a richness and a problem. When you approach genre cinema for example, you have to know how to work with an extensive reservoir of images and clichés. And that's interesting.

Sébastien Pilote



## **CAST**

Maria Chapdelaine Samuel Chapdelaine Laura Chapdelaine

François Paradis Eutrope Gagnon Lorenzo Surprenant

Edwige Légaré Le Curé Le Docteur Éphrem Surprenant

### THE CHAPDELAINE CHILDREN

Tit'bé Alma Rose Télésphore Esdras Da'bé Sara Montpetit Sébastien Ricard Hélène Florent

Émile Schneider Antoine Olivier Pilon Robert Naylor

Martin Dubreuil Danny Gilmore Gabriel Arcand Gilbert Sicotte

Arno LeMay Charlotte St-Martin Thomas Haché Henri Picard Xavier Rivard-Désy

### **CREATIVE TEAM**

Director / Screenwriter

**Producers** 

Line Producer Production Manager

Director of Photography

**Artistic Director** 

Composer

Editing

Sound

Costume Designer

Key Make-Up Artist

**Key Hairstylist** 

Casting

1st Assistant Director

Script

**Post-Production Supervisor** 

**Set Photographers** 

Artwork

Canadian Distributor

**International Sales** 

Sébastien Pilote

Pierre Even, Item 7 Sylvain Proulx, Multipix

Yanick Savard Philippe Montel

Michel La Veaux

Jean Babin

Philippe Brault

Richard Comeau

Gilles Corbeil Olivier Calvert Stéphane Bergeron Bernard Gariépy Strobl

Francesca Chamberland

Djina Caron Martin Lapointe

Daniel Poisson Pierre Pageau ADCQ, Gros Plan

Éric Parenteau

Mona Medawar

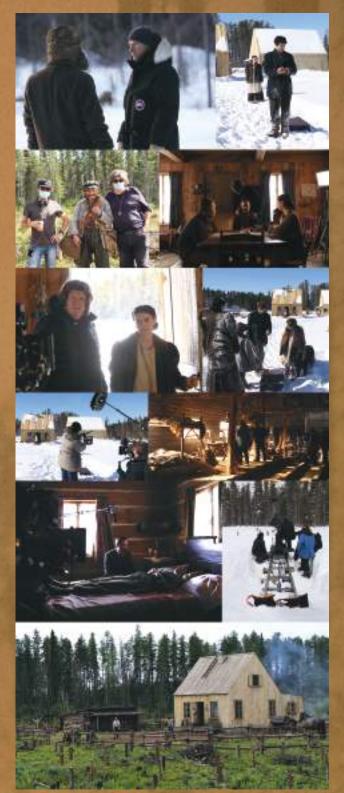
Pierre Thériault

Sébastien Raymond Laurence Grandbois Bernard

Karine Savard

MK2 MILE END

WaZabi Films





# THE ACTORS



## SARA MONTPETIT / Maria Chapdelaine

Trained to perform from a very young age, Sara Montpetit began her introduction to the theater in elementary school. She then continued her theatre studies throughout her school career, notably at the Robert-Gravel school in theatre concentration and then at the Saint-Laurent CEGEP.

The public will discover Sara for the first time on screen in the adaptation of *Maria Chapdelaine*, directed by Sébastien Pilote where she will play the title role of this adaptation of Louis Hémon's novel.

Sara is also the founder of the collective *Pour le futur Montréal*, which fights for climate justice. This movement to mobilize young people in Montreal and Quebec has its origins in the action of the young Swedish woman, Greta Thunberg.



# SÉBASTIEN RICARD / Samuel Chapdelaine

A 1998 graduate of the National Theatre School, Sébastien Ricard shares his talent between singing (founding member of Loco Locass) and acting. Well known to the public for his role in the television series *Tabou*, he has also appeared in *Olivier*, 30 Vies, En Thérapie, Fortier, Les Hauts et les bas de Sophie Paquin and Nos étés III.

Since 2019, we can see him in the TV series *Une Autre histoire*. On the theatre stage, he has acted in several productions directed by Brigitte Haentjens at the *Sybillines* creation theater; *L'opéra de quat'sous* (Usine C), *La nuit juste avant les forêts* (Ateliers Jean-Brillant), *Woyzeck* (Usine C), *Vivre* (Usine C) and *Sang* (Usine C). In addition, he was part of



the cast of *Poésie, sandwichs et autres soirs qui penchent* (Attitude Locomotive), *La Dame aux Camélias* (TNM), *Big Shoot* (Salle Fred Barry and Usine C), *Kamouraska* (Théâtre Denise Pelletier), *Les Manuscrits du déluge* (TNM), *Les Oiseaux de proie* (Théâtre Jean Duceppe), *Les Enfants d'Irène* (Théâtre Petit à Petit) and in 2015, *Richard III* (TNM). In 2017 and 2018, he participated in the musical theater *La Bibliothèque interdite* presented at the Théâtre de Ouat'Sous and on tour.

In films, he played Dédé Fortin, the singer of the group Les Colocs in Dédé, à travers les brumes for which he received the Jutra for best actor. He also took part in the films Une jeune fille, Avant que mon coeur bascule, De ma fenêtre, sans maison, Histoire de famille, Les Invasions barbares, 15 février 1839, Gabrielle, Antoine et Marie, Chorus, Hochelaga, terre des âmes and L'Acrobate. This year, we will also see him in Le Club Vinland, the latest feature film by Benoit Pilon.

# **HÉLÈNE FLORENT / Laura Chapdelaine**



Since her graduation from the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec in 2000, Hélène Florent has had the opportunity to participate in several feature films such as *Yellowknife, La Vie avec mon père, Dans les villes, La Lâcheté, Lucidité passagère, Sarah préfère la course* and *Café de Flore*.

On television, she has appeared in several series including *La Galère*, *Toute la vérité*, *Pour Sarah*, *La Dérape*, *Unité* 9 and *Lance et compte*. On stage, she has participated in a dozen productions in Quebec City and Montreal, including *Le Cid* and *Le malade imaginaire*.

Hélène has been the recipient of four Artis Awards in the Female Lead: Television Series category, as well as being nominated for four consecutive years in the *Personality of the Year* category. The *Vancouver Film Critics Circle Awards* also recognized her for *Best Supporting Actress* for the feature film *Café de Flore*.

## ANTOINE OLIVIER PILON / Eutrope Gagnon

Born in 1997, Antoine Olivier Pilon made his film debut at the age of 12 in the title role of *Frisson des collines* directed by Richard Roy. For this role, he won in 2012 the award for the most promising actor at the International Film Festival Du grain à démoudre, in France. It was also in 2012 that Antoine Olivier was called upon to make an appearance in Xavier Dolan's film *Laurence Anyways* and got the lead role of Janeau Trudel in the film *Les Pee-Wee 3D : l'hiver qui a changé ma vie* (Éric Tessier), for which he won the *Young Artist Award* for Best Actor in a Foreign.

In 2013, he got the lead role in the controversial music video of the band Indochine, *Collège Boy* also directed by Xavier Dolan. The filmmaker then starred him in *Mommy*, a film that won the Jury Prize at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival. For this performance, Antoine Olivier was voted the most promising actor of 2014 by Elle France magazine and won several prestigious awards including the Satellite Award in Los Angeles, the Best Actor Award at the Canadian Screen Awards in Toronto, the Iris for Best Actor in Quebec, as well as the Bayard d'or for Best Actor at the Festival international du film francophone de Namur, in Belgium.



In 2016, for his performance as Tim in the film 1:54 (Yan England), he won the Valois for best actor at the Festival du film francophone d'Angoulême in France. Antoine Olivier was also reprising the role of Janeau Trudel in the film *Junior majeur* in November 2017. In the spring of 2018, the prolific actor was shooting his first feature film in english: *Target Number One* directed by Daniel Roby and produced by Caramel Films. We will soon be able to see him back on the big screen in a second English spoken feature, *Death of a Ladie's Man* by Matt Bissonnette and also in the feature film *Sam* by Yan England.

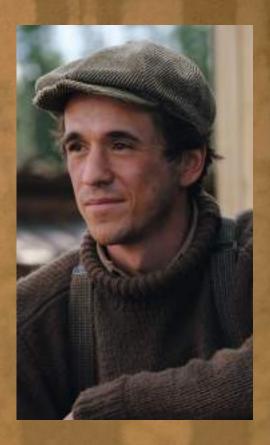
## ÉMILE SCHNEIDER / François Paradis

Émile Schneider studied acting in Saint-Hyacinthe. Before graduating, he landed his first role in *Après la neige*, a film by Paul Barbeau. He then landed the lead role alongside Roy Dupuis in Onur Karaman's *Là où Atilla passe...* (Nominated for Best Actor at IRIS). He plays Pierre Sauvageau, the title role in *Embrasse-moi comme tu m'aimes* by André Forcier (Best Canadian film and Innovation at the FFM) and Jerry in *Les Fleurs oubliées* by the same director. He was also part of the trio of actors in *Le Pacte des anges* by Richard Anger.

He has had several roles in internationally acclaimed short films (*Recrue, Je finirai en prison...*), public readings, "underground" musical creations and music videos. He does voices for radio and TV. Émile has also acted in several series such as *Fée-Éric, L'imposteur, Dominos* (season 1 and 2), *Le Monstre, Le Chalet* (season 4 and 5), *Victor Lessard* and *L'Académie*, to mention only those.

He was seen on the theater stage in *L'Iliade*, directed by Marc Beaupré, in *La Société des poètes disparus*, directed by Sébastien David and in the play Sang by Lars Norén, directed by Brigitte Haentjens and presented in winter 2020.

He is also the creator and actor of the series *La Loi c'est la loi* presented on TV5.



## ROBERT NAYLOR / Lorenzo Surprenant



Robert Naylor is known in film for Podz's (Daniel Grou) film 10 ½, in which he plays the lead role, and in television for the popular series 19-2. He also participates in the youth series *Subito texto*.

On the international side, he can be seen in the film The Immortals by Tarsem Singh released in 2011 and, in 2014 in the film *Every Thing Will Be Fine* by German director Wim Wenders alongside James Franco and Rachel McAdams.

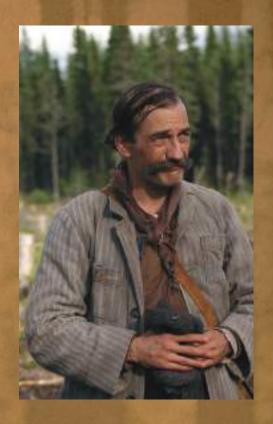
He shot the feature film 1:54 by Yan England in 2016 and the film Sahara by Pierre Coré in 2017. His most recent films are Ara Ball's Quand l'amour se creuse un trou and in 2019 Denis Côté's film Répertoire des villes disparues.

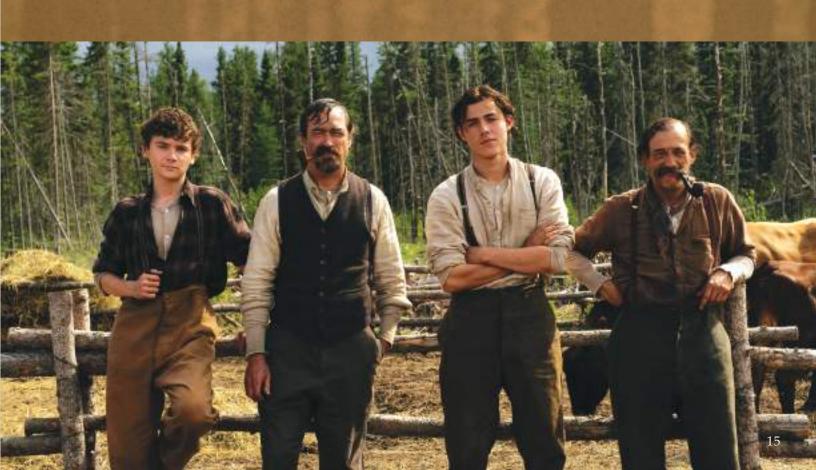
## MARTIN DUBREUIL / Edwige Légaré

Martin Dubreuil is a self-taught actor who made his first steps in the early 90s where he accumulated roles in short films of all kinds. He made his professional debut with Pierre Falardeau who offered him roles in his last three films: *Elvis Gratton II* and *III* and *15 février 1839*.

For the past 10 years, he has appeared in a number of television series such as *Fatale Station, Victor Lessard, Trop, Les Pays d'en haut, Les Honorables, Toute la vie,* as well as in numerous feature films. In 2010, he made a name for himself with his role as Anthony Lemaire in *Les 7 jours du Talion,* directed by Podz and based on the novel by Patrick Senécal, for which he was nominated at the Jutra Awards in the *Best Supporting Actor* category. His role in 10 1/2, also by Podz, later earned him a Genie Award nomination. Martin Dubreuil plays also an excellent *Felix* in *Felix et Meira* by Maxime Giroux.

His collection of memorable roles earned him the first *Prix Hommage* from the *Festival Regard* in 2017, and the *Prix Hommage du Festival Longue vue sur le court* in 2019 for his contribution to emerging cinema. He receives additional nominations for his supporting role in Karl Lemieux's *Maudite Poutine* and for his sublime *Philippe* in Maxime Giroux's *La Grande Noirceur*. In 2019, he wins the Iris for *Best Male Performance-Leading Role* for his portrayal of poet *Yves Boisvert* in the film *À tous ceux qui ne me lisent pas*, by Yan Giroux. Martin Dubreuil will also be seen on screen in 2020 in Jean-Carl Boucher's first film, *Flashwood*.





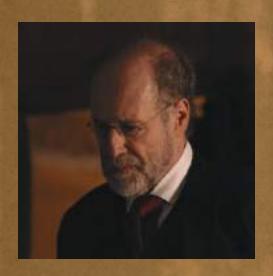
### DANNY GILMORE / Le Curé

For more than 25 years, Danny Gilmore has distinguished himself on stage, television, and film. Since his very first role on stage, he has participated in several important theatrical productions including *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Martine Beaulne, where he plays the title role of *Romeo*, *Tartuffe*, directed by Lorraine Pintal, as well as in *Un tramway nommé désir* and *La Cerisaie*, both directed by Alexandre Marine.

On the small screen, he has played numerous roles in series such as *Ces enfants d'ailleurs*, *Histoire de famille*, *Minuit le soir*, *Séquelles* and the American historical saga *Barkskins*. Soon, we will be able to see him in the continuation of the series *Amber Alert*. In the movie industry, his performance in *Lilies* (*Les Feluettes*) earned him a Genie nomination for Best Actor. Danny always approaches his roles with nuance and intensity, whether we think of his performances in the films *The Point*, *Marie Antoinette*, *Gaz bar blues*, *Les Fils de Marie* or *Crème glacée*, *chocolat et autres consolations*. Recently, he also participated in the feature films *Pour vivre ici* and *My Salinger Year*.



### GABRIEL ARCAND / Le Docteur



Gabriel Arcand is undoubtedly one of the most respected and accomplished actors in Quebec. His long list of theatrical, cinematographic and televisual works as an actor, author and director attests to this. He stands out for his rigour, his integrity and his immense talent, both here and in Europe. In theater, he has been seen, among others, in *Blackbird*, *Antilopes*, *Le Professionnel*, *Hamlet*, *Le Tartuffe*, *Moi*, *Feuerbach*, *Avant la retraite* and *Don Juan* under the direction of various directors, including Téo Spychalski, Lorraine Pintal and Martine Beaulne. He has also had the opportunity to direct several theatrical works that have left their mark on the Quebec scene, including *Crime et châtiment*, *Artaud/Tête à tête*, *Miracle de la rose*, *Orfène* and *L'amer*. In 1974, he founded and was director, then co-artistic director of the Groupe de la Veillée, the founding company of the Prospero theater. He is currently a member of the Groupe de la Veillée company and a member of the board of directors of the Théâtre Prospero.

In cinema, he has been collecting important roles since 1971 in landmark Quebec productions such as Léa Pool's *Ma mère est chez le coiffeur*, Philippe Falardeau's *Congorama*, Louis Bélanger's *Post mortem*, Denys Arcand's *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* and *Le Crime d'Ovide Plouffe*, Francis Mankiewicz's *Les Portes tournantes*, Jean-Claude Labrecque's *L'affaire Coffin* and Gilles Carle's *L'Âge de la machine*. Gabriel Arcand's career is marked by his role in Gilles Carle's *Les Plouffe* in 1981. More recently, he starred in the film *Karakara* by Claude Gagnon and in *Le Démantèlement* by Sébastien Pilote. The latter film was presented at the Cannes Film Festival in 2013 and won a multitude of awards and nominations in Canada and elsewhere. He also played the lead role in the feature film *Le Fils de Jean*, for which he was nominated for a César award.

On the small screen, Quebecers have seen him in series such as *Annie et ses hommes*, *Belle-Baie*, *Tag*, *Jean Moulin* and *Mensonges*. Starting in 2014, he personified Monsieur P. in *Au secours de Béatrice*, which earned him two Gémaux nominations. The list of numerous awards and mentions also testifies to Gabriel Arcand's important past and present contribution to Quebec culture. Since the beginning of his career, he has been a winner and nominee in the Jutra, Genie, Gémeaux and L'Association québécoise des critiques de théâtre competitions.

## GILBERT SICOTTE / Ephrem Surprenant



A seasoned actor, Gilbert Sicotte has carved out a prominent place for himself in Quebec's cultural landscape, both through his unforgettable performances on the small and large screens and on Quebec stages. On television, he has played in *Des dames de coeur, Bouscotte, Fortier, Les Soeurs Elliot, Trauma, Ces gars-là, Victor Lessard, Catastrophe* and *Boomerang*. He also narrated the documentary *Jean Béliveau* in 2017.

On stage, he has been seen in *La nuit des rois, Tchekhov, Tchekhova, Les beaux Dimanches, Nature morte, Les Trois mousquetaires* and *Les Grandes occasions* to name a few. He also participated in the *Grand cirque ordinaire* in the 70s. Gilbert also taught acting at the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Montréal from 1987 to 2017. He was a member of the board of directors of the Institut national de l'image et du son for several years. He has been a member of the Order of Canada since 2014.

In film, noteworthy are his performances in *L'enfant d'eau*, *Les Pots cassés*, *Les Bons débarras*, *Léolo*, *Cap tourmente*, *La Vie secrète des gens heureux*, *Continental*, *un film sans fusil*, *Piché*: *Entre ciel et terre*, *L'Instinct de mort*, *Mesrine*, *Le Vendeur*, *Louis Cyr* and *Miraculum*. Gilbert earned the Best Actor award for the film *Le Vendeur* at the 2012 Jutra Awards. He is also in the films *Les Loups* by Sophie Deraspe, *La Passion d'Augustine* by Léa Pool and Paul à Québec by François Bouvier, a film for which he won the *Prix du Gala du cinéma québécois* in the *Best Actor* category as well as the *Prix Outarde* at the *Festival Cinoche* in the *Best Actor* category in 2016. Gilbert was also part of the cast of Samuel Thivierge's *Identités*. He is Charlie in the film adaptation of Jocelyne Saucier's novel *Il pleuvait des oiseaux*, directed by Louise Archambault. He will also play the role of *Jean Gamache* in the film *Mafia inc.*, by Podz.

## THE CHAPDELAINE CHILDREN



## ARNO LEMAY / Tit'bé

Arno LeMay is the son of Lydia Bouchard, a ballet dancer who became a choreographer and show designer for Cirque du Soleil - and his father, an actor, singer and musician (Joël LeMay), he started shooting TV (commercials, series, short films) and doing voice-overs at the age of 3. After a break of some 2 years towards the end of elementary school, the urge to get a little more serious took him last year. The result: a rather striking first role in the series *Ruptures*. A student in secondary 2, Arno has also been studying classical piano since the age of 5.

## CHARLOTTE ST-MARTIN / Alma Rose

For the past few years, Charlotte St-Martin has been accumulating roles both on TV and in movies. Among other things, she enjoyed playing in Robin Aubert's film, *Les Affamés*, in the series *Conseils de famille* and more recently in *Épidémie*. In the past year, the 11-year-old has also lent her voice to several dubbed characters in series and films, including *The Snow Queen 2, The Lion King, Toy Story 4, Avengers, Esme & Roy*, etc.

Determined, Charlotte is a bright young girl who bites into life and grows up with a smile. She spends her free time swimming, singing to the sound of her ukulele... then writing and making her first little films with her friends!

# THOMAS HACHÉ / Télésphore

Thomas started in the film industry at the age of 5. He began to forge a place for himself by quickly obtaining several contracts for advertising projects such as *Le lait*. He also played important roles on television in *Ruptures*, *Lâcher prise* and most recently, the role of *Tutu* in the series *Défense d'entrer!* 

# HENRI PICARD / Esdras Chapdelaine

Henri Picard has been immersed in the world of film since birth. At the age of two, he played his first role in *L'Audition*, a film directed by Luc Picard, where Henri moved many. He was later seen briefly in the cast of the film *Ésimésac* in 2012, where at age 10, he learned to act with other actors his age. In 2017, in addition to the film *Les Rois mongols* where he plays a leading role, Henri can be seen on the small screen in the series *Jenny*, directed by Jean-Sébastien Lord. Moreover, this same year was even more prolific for him as he landed a lead role in the feature film *À tous ceux qui ne me lisent pas* directed by Yan Giroux. Henri was also seen on the big screen in 2019 in *Mafia inc.*, the latest feature film by Podz.

In the past year, he has appeared in *Cerebrum* and *District* 31, among others. Multitalented, Henri is also a musician and singer. He plays the piano, the drums and the guitar with great skill.

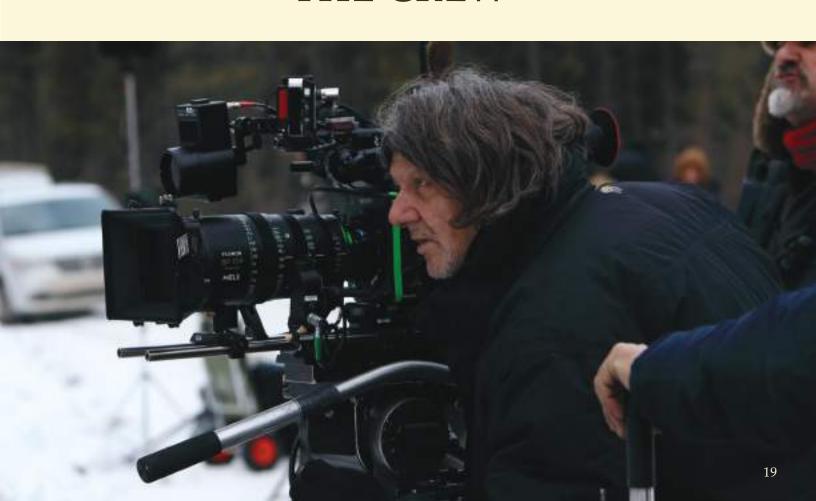
# XAVIER RIVARD-DÉSY / Da'bé Chapdelaine

Born in Saguenay on November 17, 2003, Xavier discovered his interest in acting at a young age. Once he moved to Montreal, he expressed his desire to become a comedian. He convinced his parents to audition for *Kaboom* in the fall of 2017. His high school drama training was definitely an asset in landing the role of *François* in Benoît Pilon's feature film, *Le Club Vinland*. This first major set experience was a revelation for the young actor who plans to continue his career in the field.

In conjunction with the end of the shooting of *Le Club Vinland*, Xavier completed the audition process for the role of Da'bé in the feature film *Maria Chapdelaine*. It is with great pleasure that Xavier returned to his native region to film with Sébastien Pilote.



# THE CREW



### SCREENWRITER / DIRECTOR

## SÉBASTIEN PILOTE

Sébastien Pilote was born and lives in the Saguenay region. His first film, the short film Dust Bowl Ha! Ha!, was selected in competition at the Locarno festival. The film was subsequently rewarded at the Festival du nouveau cinéma in Montréal, selected in the TIFF's Canada Top Ten, and received the Best Short/Medium Film Award from the Association québécoise des critiques de cinéma. In 2011, he directed his first feature film Le Vendeur (The Salesman), which was selected in competition at the Sundance festival. Winner of the FIPRESCI award in Turin, Mannheim and San Francisco, Le Vendeur is also awarded the Best Film of the Year award in Quebec by the Association québécoise des critiques de cinéma. Le Vendeur receives the Gilles Carle Award and 5 nominations at the Gala des Jutra. The film is also part of the Canada Top Ten of the Toronto Film Festival. His second feature film Le Démantèlement (The Auction) was selected at *La Semaine de la Critique* in Cannes where he won the best screenplay prize (SACD prize). He was nominated seven times at the Jutra Gala and in the categories of best director, best screenplay and best film at the Canadian Academy of Film and Television gala. Le Démantèlement won the International Federation of Film Press (FIPRESCI) award at the Turin Film Festival, then won the Grand



Prix of the French Film Awards in Paris. His third feature film, *La Disparition des lucioles*, was selected for competition at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival, and was named *Best Canadian Film* at the Toronto Film Festival (TIFF). Sébastien Pilote is also co-founder of the Festival REGARD.

## **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

## MICHEL LA VEAUX



For more than twenty-five years, Michel La Veaux has signed the images of hundred of films, both documentary and fiction. His sensitive eye and desire to make significant images have made him a director of photography recognized for his creative contribution on both the national and international scenes. Michel La Veaux defines his job as director of photography as being as much emotional as technical work. With each film, he pushes further his reflection of giving meaning to the images to touch the soul of the story. Throughout his career, Michel La Veaux associated with several directors with whom he maintains a relationship as a leading collaborator in the continuity of their cinema. Twice a finalist for the Jutra award for Best cinematography (Catherine Martin's *Trois temps après la mort d'Anna*, Micheline Lanctôt's *Pour l'amour de Dieu*), he won this Jutra award in 2014 for his work on *Le Démantèlement* by Sébastien Pilote. In 2015, he directed

Hôtel La Louisiane, his first feature-length documentary that was well received by critics and was also a success with the public. In 2016, Benoît Pilon hired him for the photography of *Iqaluit*, then collaborated for the first time with Guy Edoin by signing the images of his film *Les Exilés*. He also completed the images for *La Disparition des lucioles*, his third feature film with Sébastien Pilote. The documentary *Labrecque*, une caméra de la mémoire is Michel La Veaux second time directing.

### COSTUME DESIGNER

### FRANCESCA CHAMBERLAND



Francesca Chamberland began her career as a dresser in 1978. She went on to become a costume designer on the films *Some Girls* (1988) and *In Love and War* (1996), before becoming costume director in 1997 on the film *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*. Francesca has since created the costumes on numerous films such as *Bon Cop*, *Bad Cop*, *Monsieur Lazhar*, *Mambo Italiano* and, in 2020 *Le Club Vinland* and *Maria Chapdelaine*. She won the 2007 Genie Award for Best Costume Design for her work in the film *Maurice Richard* and she won the Iris Award for Costume Design for the film *Chasse-Galerie: La légende* (2016). At the Prix Gémeaux, she won the statuette for *Best Costume Design: all categories* in 2008 for *Les Lavigueur*, *la vraie histoire* and, in 2016 and in 2019 with the series *Les Pays d'en Haut*.

### ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## JEAN BABIN

A Gaspesian from Baie-des-Chaleurs, it was after studying visual arts and earning a bachelor's degree in Animation and Cultural Research from UQÀM that Jean Babin began working as a set designer and prop maker on various music videos, commercials and short films. His dedicated work and ingenious ideas allowed him to climb the ladder quickly, and it was in 1997 that he worked on his first feature film as art director on Denis Villeneuve's *Un 32 août sur Terre*. This was to be followed by repeated collaborations with several directors: he would go on to work on more than fifty projects for film and television, giving life to sets of all genres and eras, brought together only by the realism and attention to detail that characterizes his work. His creativity will be rewarded on numerous occasions: he will receive a total of seven nominations, in addition to being the recipient of three Gémeaux awards for the series *Tabou*, *Grande Ourse* and *Les Beaux malaises*.



## **EDITOR**

## RICHARD COMEAU



Comeau has edited feature films for more than 25 years, demonstrating his sense of rhythm and his excellent editorial acuity. He has worked with filmmakers such as Sébastien Pilote, Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette, Kim Nguyen, Denis Villeneuve, Philippe Falardeau, Louise Archambault and Benoit Pilon. Richard is one of Quebec's most respected editors and has won numerous awards. The greatest happiness for him will always be to be invited to share the universe of a filmmaker and to be able to support him in his creative work.

### PHILIPPE BRAULT



Philippe Brault has been working for nearly twenty years as a producer and accompanying musician with many of Canada's leading singers (Pierre Lapointe, Ariane Moffatt, Michel Rivard, Dear Criminals among others). As a composer, he has signed the music for more than forty theatre, dance and circus shows, in addition to a few television series. *Maria Chapdelaine* is his third collaboration with Sébastien Pilote, after *La Disparition des lucioles* which won him the Iris award for best original music at the 2019 Québec Cinémagala.

## **PRODUCERS**

## PIERRE EVEN, ITEM 7

Item 7 produced feature films of all genres with a strong and original cinematographic signature. Since its creation, Item 7 has produced more than 17 feature films, many of which have had a notable impact on the international scene.

By 2011, Jean-Marc Vallée's film *Café de Flore*, shot in Montreal and Paris and starring Vanessa Paradis, had its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival and helped the company gain recognition in Europe. The following year, it was with Kim Nguyen's film *War Witch* (*Rebelle*) that Item 7 gained attention when the film was nominated for the 2013 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film, collected ten trophies at the Canadian Screen Awards and eight Jutra Awards in Quebec. It also received the Silver Bear for Best Actress at the 2012 Berlinale and the *Best film* and *Best Actress* awards at the Tribeca Film Festival.



In 2015, *Brooklyn*, a co-production with Ireland and Great Britain, collected a dozen awards and more than 100 nominations, including 3 Academy Awards for *Best film*, *Best Actress* (Saoirse Ronan) and *Best Adapted Screenplay*. The same year, *The Kid* (*Le Fils de Jean*), co-produced with France, garnered over 400,000 admissions in France and the work of its lead actors was highlighted. Actor Gabriel Arcand wins the Iris Award at the Quebec Cinema Gala for *Best Actor* and a nomination for *Best Supporting Actor* at the 2017 Cesar Awards with Pierre Deladonchamps. In 2016, Pierre Even shot four features, *Eye on Juliet* by director Kim Nguyen with Joe Cole, *Bon Cop Bad Cop 2* written by Patrick Huard and directed by Alain DesRochers starring Patrick Huard and Colm Feore which garnered a monster hit with over \$7 million at the Canadian box-office, *Nous sommes les autres*, director Jean-François Asselin's first feature film co-written with Jacques Drolet with Pascale Bussières, Émile Proulx-Cloutier and Jean-Michel Anctil and finally *Birthmarked*, written by Marc Tulin and directed by Emanuel Hoss-Desmarais which stars Toni Collette and Matthew Goode.

His most ambitious project to date, Kim Nguyen's film *The Hummingbird Project* starring Jesse Eisenberg, Alexander Skarsgård and Salma Hayek, premiered at TIFF in 2018. The film has sold in more than 75 countries. Upcoming theatrical releases in fall 2021 are *Maria Chapdelaine* by Sébastien Pilote, Best Sellers starring Michael Caine and *Aubrey Plaza*, a debut film by Lina Rossler, the VR short *Marco & Polo Go Round*, a first foray into virtual reality for Item 7 in co-production with Belgium.





## **PRODUCERS**

## SYLVAIN PROULX, MULTIPIX

In 1988, Sylvain Proulx founded Multipix. He is one of the best experts in his field in Canada. Over the years, Multipix has been involved in the administration, accounting and production of more than 75 feature film projects, totalling more than one billion dollars.

As of 2005, Multipix focuses solely on administering and producing feature films, mostly in co-production, with France, Belgium and the UK. Sylvain Proulx produced the feature films *Territoires*, a first film by Olivier Abbou, *Best film Award* at the Brussels International Fantastic Film Festival (2011) in coproduction with Melleny Productions, *Enragés* (Rabid Dogs) by Éric Hannezo, *La Peur* by Damien Odoul, *My Sisters' Kids & the Gold Diggers* and *Shut In*.

In production in 2020 in addition to *Maria Chapdelaine*, the feature film *Le Loup et le lion*.





### TECHNICAL INFORMATION

**GENRE** 

ORIGINAL VERSION SUBTITLED VERSION **COUNTRY OF ORIGIN** FILMING LOCATIONS

LENGTH **AUDIO IMAGE** 

SHOOTING FORMAT **DELIVERY FORMAT** 

DRAMA **FRENCH ENGLISH** 

QUÉBEC, CANADA LAC ST-JEAN REGION

158 MINUTES

1.85

**6K DIGITAL** 

DCP

### **CONTACTS**

### DISTRIBUTOR

MK2 MILE END

Posters, trailer, clips, downloadable press kit: Group bookings

(O) /MariaChapdelaine.lefilm

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#### **MEDIAS**

**COMMUNICATIONS MINGOTWO** 

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### **PRODUCER**

ITEM 7

Jeannette Garcia jgarcia@item7.ca

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