

# REVIEWS



● Today's angry young man for all seasons: Pierre Curzi as Lucien Brouillard

## Bruno Carrière's Lucien Brouillard

Bruno Carrière's first dramatic feature jumps a fair number of hurdles on sheer energy of intention. This character study cum political thriller is at times both overly ambitious and a little muddled, but that never seems to dull its spirit. Carrière displays an instinct for canny casting and solid film craft, both of which combine to pull him over some tough dramatic terrain.

*Lucien Brouillard* is mostly about the confrontation between personal ambition and self-sacrifice, but it gleans both texture and tone from its setting. Lucien (Pierre Curzi) is a kind of self-styled social agitator, a one-man crusade against injustice whose gestures of protest often land him in trouble. His legal net is provided by childhood friend Jacques Martineau (Roger Blay), a well-placed lawyer with visions of ascension into Québec's ruling class. Just how much of a liability Lucien will prove to him is something Lucien's wife Alice (Marie Tifo) sees more clearly than her husband. When the reactionary premier Provencher (Jean Duceppe) blocks Martineau's political ambitions, the lawyer hatches a plot to rid himself of two road-blocks at once; political double-dealing and assassination suddenly hijack the movie.

It's that twist of melodrama that really throws the spanner in the works here, but the calibre of performance and the particulars of place and character pretty much redeem the imbalance. Pierre Curzi is marvellous as a working-class Québécois whose battle for right is finally self-destructive. There's something very childlike about Lucien, and Curzi captures it perfectly with that lopsided grin of his and wonderfully articulate body language. His courting of Alice, his angry disbelief at a crooked legal system and his naive trust in Martineau's intentions are what give Lucien his sad-eyed grace: he's set up for a crash from the

beginning because he *believes* so badly. Curzi is the centre of the movie, and he holds it with absolute conviction. Strong support, as always, is offered by Tifo as the madonna-faced Alice, and Blay as the rather complex Martineau, whose conflicting emotions are finally mangled somewhat by the awkward climax.

What's beautifully evoked here is Québec's passionate political edge, the way people tend to commit themselves with Lucien's brand of "all or nothing" dedication. The film weaves that passion into a classic tale of exploiter versus exploited with a kind of gentle grace, something that remains undefeated with the pitch for dramatic intrigue at the end. Carrière is a convincing director of both actors and narrative, and he's packaged the movie with clean, unpretentious technique. But there is a sour note here. As to how the camerawork of the extraordinary Pierre Mignot measures up, I'm hard-pressed to say: the distributors opted to meet a tight release date by screening a badly-timed test

**LUCIEN BROUILLARD** d. Bruno Carrière sc. Jacques Jacob, Jacques Paris, Bruno Carrière dialog. Louis Saia d.o.p. Pierre Mignot art d. Gilles Aird ad. Serge Beauchemin ed. Michel Arcand mus. Yves Laferrière 1st a.d. Ginette Breton 2nd a.d. Robert Martel 3rd a.d. Claude Cartier continuity Ginette Sénécal loc. man. Suzanne Girard p. assts. Jean-Pierre Laurendeau, Marie Potvin, Ronald Guevremont p. sec. Suzanne Comtois admin. Bernadette Payeur, Bérandère Maltais p. man. René Gueissaz 1st asst. cam. Jean Lépine trainee Christiane Guernon add. cam. Serge Giguère, Bruno Carrière stills Bertrand Carrière boom Yvon Benoit asst. ed. Noël Almey ed. ed. Paul Dion asst. ed. ed. Michel Charron props Marc Corriveau asst. props Philippe Chevalier dec. Maurice Leblanc painter Guy Saint-Georges make-up Micheline Foisy hair Bob Pritchett cost. dea. Michèle Hamel dresser Martine Fontaine lighting Daniel Chretien elec. Robert Lapierre Jr, Jacques Girard, Denis Ménard key grip Michel Chouin musicians Robert Lachapelle, Richard Perrotte, Robert Stanley sd. ex. Terry Burke mixer Michel Charron titres Michel Larocque animation Film Docteur du Québec Inc. archives Pascal Gélinas, Ateliers Audio-Visuels du Québec Inc. opticals Antoine Desilet, Pierre G. Verge, Michel Delisle lp. Pierre Curzi, Roger Blay, Marie Tifo, Paul Savoie, Jean Duceppe, Germain Houde lab. Bellevue-Pathé Québec (1972) ltee, Film Optical (Québec) ltee, Negbec Inc. equipment rental Panavision Canada ltee assoc. p. Marc Daigle exec. p. René Gueissaz p.c. l'Association coopérative de productions audio-visuelles (ACPAV), the CFDC, Bellevue-Pathé Québec (1972) Ltd., Famous Players Ltd. and Société Radio-Canada colour 35mm running time 89 min., 1983

print for the press. Many of the night exteriors were positively illegible, and that does strike one as being patently unfair to both Carrière and his really top-notch DOP.

Anne Reiter ●

## Jean-Guy Noël's Contrecoeur

Jean-Guy Noël's *Contrecoeur* seems full of interesting ideas and totally bereft of some means to pull them together. His tale of three misfits who band together for a trip to a small Québec town follows a more or less conventional narrative, and then doesn't resolve it: that's by no means a cardinal sin, but *Contrecoeur* doesn't seem sure of its own intentions and ends up confusing the spectator. That's a flat-out problem.

The story follows Blanche (Monique Mercure) and Fabienne (Anouk Simard) as they make plans to visit the town of Contrecoeur where they've left behind some fairly complex family ties. Théo (Maurice Podbrey) is Fabienne's father and Blanche's ex-husband, while the alcoholic Roger (Gilbert Sicotte) is Fabienne's ex-husband and Blanche's son. The two women take Fabienne's boyfriend Jean-Paul up on his offer to drive them to Contrecoeur in his oil tanker; during a long snowbound night on the highway, the three play power

games and uncover some truths — most significant is the fact that Jean-Paul is dying of multiple sclerosis. Blanche has insisted from the outset that she is travelling to meet spring, an ongoing, mid-winter obsession that Fabienne finds rather annoying. But she capitulates to it after their presence in Contrecoeur sets off a chain of emotional events; the two women strike out on the highway again with a sickly Jean-Paul between them.

It's possible that *Contrecoeur* is intended to work as a somewhat complex mood piece, but it doesn't, finally; there's so much dramatic baggage here that you're trying to piece together the plot most of the time. Noël has enlisted the

**CONTRECOEUR** d. Jean-Guy Noël sc. Jean-Guy Noël, Gilles Noël d.o.p. François Beauchemin s.d. Jean Rival ed. Marthe de la Chevrotière p. man. Michel Beliaeff, Luc Lamy 1st a.d. Jacques Wilbrod Benoit loc. man. Francine Forest art. des. Vianney Gauthier cost. des. Johanne Prigent make-up Diane Sinard cont. Marie La Haye 1st asst. cam. Louis de Ernsted, Michel Bissonnette, Robert Vanherweghem 2nd asst. cam. Daniel Jobin asst. ed. Marcel Fraser boom Michel Charron asst. art. d. Claude Pare props Charles Bernier stills Anne de Guise gaffer Jacques Paquet best boy Daniel Chretien, Richer Francoeur key grip Michel Chohin grip Jean Trudeau, Marc de Ernsted p. assts. Nathalie Moliavko-Visotzky, Robert Lapierre p. sec. Estelle Lemieux sd. ed. Marcel Pothier asst. ed. Yves Chaput, Paul Dion mixer Michel Charron neg. cutter Carole Gagnon titres Madeleine Leduc legal André Thauvette music Jan Garbarek, Ralph Towner, Offenbach lab. Les Laboratoires de Film Québec Télémontage, Bellevue Pathé lp. Monique Mercure, Anouk Simard, Raymond Cloutier, Gilbert Sicotte, Maurice Podbrey, Claude Maher, Françoise Bérubé, Michel Forget, Fernand Gignac, Louise Saint-Pierre p. Pierre Lamy p.c. Les Productions Pierre Lamy ltee, with assistance from the CFDC, l'Institut québécois du cinéma, Radio-Québec, Les Cinémas Unis color 35mm running time 95 min.



● Emotions run high for Gilbert Sicotte and Anouk Simard