Jésus de Montréal

As we hurdle toward the 21st century, which André Malraux thought "will be mystical—or it will not be," Denys Arcand has set off reverberations with a movie that yearns for mysteries, miracles, and eternal love. In this luscious film, Jesus and the disciples are unsuccessful actors who, among other gigs, dub porno movies and model in perfume commercials to put pizza and wine on the table.

Jesus de Montréal lights up the screen because it plays frankly, and also dead seriously, with a multitude of ambiguities. The film is all contrasts, echoes, and double meanings. It is both reverential and mocking; rooted in concrete reality, and up on cloud Nine. As dark as blood, as sparkling as a sip of rose, Jesus smiles down knowingly, letting tragedy co-exist with slapstick comedy, and irony with ecstasy.

Jying about the picture in a press kit interview, Arcand envisions the "life we live today as a super dragma where "everything is present" from condoms and horoscopes to anthologies of Shakespeare and the Bible. In our world, the director would no doubt argue, pure tragedy played straight is doomed to become a ponderous museum piece—which is why Jesus de Montréal opens on a handsome, tomfoolery-looking young man in 19th-century costume, mingling up his Baro' and "Johnny" voices. But the dubbing director's voice immediately crackles on the p.a., "Don't worry. Nobody will notice any difference," making one of the film's many barbed comments from the World According to Arcand.

The mock pornography in this scene bounces off an earlier scene's shots of ham actors pontificating about their sins. These "religious" images appear on a video monitor belonging to Father Leclerc (Gilles Pelletier), a liltfing theatre buff who offers an opportunity to Jesus de Montréal's hero, Daniel Coulombe (Lothaire Bluteau), a young actor who needs work.

Father Leclerc wants Daniel to "modernize" The Stations of the Cross; a passion play staged on summer nights for gaggles of tourists in tennis skirts and Bermuda shorts. The priest's show is based on an outdoor spectacular that actually happens at Montréal's mountainside St. Joseph's Oratory, and was, according to Arcand, the inspiration for his film.

Like Nathanael West's Miss Lonelyhearts, Daniel is initially amused by the prospect of directing Christ's story and playing the main character. But as he meticulously researches the most up-to-date historical data about the world's most mysterious man, (approaching the project the way ex-documentarian Arcand did), and as an interesting way to tell the story reveals itself to him. Daniel starts feeling inspired.

Eventually, Jesus of Montréal gets more than he bargained for—just like the original. A new tone comes into the film. A slightly spooky, born-again librarian (Paule Baillargeon) as Christ. The beat gets too fast for Martin, who goofs, worrying he's "Burt" and "Johnny" voices. But the dubbing director's voice immediately crackles on the p.a., "Don't worry. Nobody will notice any difference," making one of the film's many barbed comments from the World According to Arcand.

The mock pornography in this scene bounces off an earlier scene's shots of ham actors pontificating about their sins. These "religious" images appear on a video monitor belonging to Father Leclerc (Gilles Pelletier), a liltfing theatre buff who offers an opportunity to Jesus de Montréal's hero, Daniel Coulombe (Lothaire Bluteau), a young actor who needs work.

Father Leclerc wants Daniel to "modernize" The Stations of the Cross; a passion play staged on summer nights for gaggles of tourists in tennis skirts and Bermuda shorts. The priest's show is based on an outdoor spectacular that actually happens at Montréal's mountainside St. Joseph's Oratory, and was, according to Arcand, the inspiration for his film.

Like Nathanael West's Miss Lonelyhearts, Daniel is initially amused by the prospect of directing Christ's story and playing the main character. But as he meticulously researches the most up-to-date historical data about the world's most mysterious man, (approaching the project the way ex-documentarian Arcand did), and as an interesting way to tell the story reveals itself to him. Daniel starts feeling inspired.

Eventually, Jesus of Montréal gets more than he bargained for—just like the original. A new tone comes into the film. A slightly spooky, born-again librarian (Paule Baillargeon) as Christ. The beat gets too fast for Martin, who goofs, worrying he's "Burt" and "Johnny" voices. But the dubbing director's voice immediately crackles on the p.a., "Don't worry. Nobody will notice any difference," making one of the film's many barbed comments from the World According to Arcand.

The mock pornography in this scene bounces off an earlier scene's shots of ham actors pontificating about their sins. These "religious" images appear on a video monitor belonging to Father Leclerc (Gilles Pelletier), a liltfing theatre buff who offers an opportunity to Jesus de Montréal's hero, Daniel Coulombe (Lothaire Bluteau), a young actor who needs work.

Father Leclerc wants Daniel to "modernize" The Stations of the Cross; a passion play staged on summer nights for gaggles of tourists in tennis skirts and Bermuda shorts. The priest's show is based on an outdoor spectacular that actually happens at Montréal's mountainside St. Joseph's Oratory, and was, according to Arcand, the inspiration for his film.

Like Nathanael West's Miss Lonelyhearts, Daniel is initially amused by the prospect of directing Christ's story and playing the main character. But as he meticulously researches the most up-to-date historical data about the world's most mysterious man, (approaching the project the way ex-documentarian Arcand did), and as an interesting way to tell the story reveals itself to him. Daniel starts feeling inspired.

Eventually, Jesus of Montréal gets more than he bargained for—just like the original. A new tone comes into the film. A slightly spooky, born-again librarian (Paule Baillargeon) as Christ. The beat gets too fast for Martin, who goofs, worrying he's "Burt" and "Johnny" voices. But the dubbing director's voice immediately crackles on the p.a., "Don't worry. Nobody will notice any difference," making one of the film's many barbed comments from the World According to Arcand.

The mock pornography in this scene bounces off an earlier scene's shots of ham actors pontificating about their sins. These "religious" images appear on a video monitor belonging to Father Leclerc (Gilles Pelletier), a liltfing theatre buff who offers an opportunity to Jesus de Montréal's hero, Daniel Coulombe (Lothaire Bluteau), a young actor who needs work.

Father Leclerc wants Daniel to "modernize" The Stations of the Cross; a passion play staged on summer nights for gaggles of tourists in tennis skirts and Bermuda shorts. The priest's show is based on an outdoor spectacular that actually happens at Montréal's mountainside St. Joseph's Oratory, and was, according to Arcand, the inspiration for his film.

Like Nathanael West's Miss Lonelyhearts, Daniel is initially amused by the prospect of directing Christ's story and playing the main character. But as he meticulously researches the most up-to-date historical data about the world's most mysterious man, (approaching the project the way ex-documentarian Arcand did), and as an interesting way to tell the story reveals itself to him. Daniel starts feeling inspired.

Eventually, Jesus of Montréal gets more than he bargained for—just like the original. A new tone comes into the film. A slightly spooky, born-again librarian (Paule Baillargeon) as Christ. The beat gets too fast for Martin, who goofs, worrying he's "Burt" and "Johnny" voices. But the dubbing director's voice immediately crackles on the p.a., "Don't worry. Nobody will notice any difference," making one of the film's many barbed comments from the World According to Arcand.

The mock pornography in this scene bounces off an earlier scene's shots of ham actors pontificating about their sins. These "religious" images appear on a video monitor belonging to Father Leclerc (Gilles Pelletier), a liltfing theatre buff who offers an opportunity to Jesus de Montréal's hero, Daniel Coulombe (Lothaire Bluteau), a young actor who needs work.

Father Leclerc wants Daniel to "modernize" The Stations of the Cross; a passion play staged on summer nights for gaggles of tourists in tennis skirts and Bermuda shorts. The priest's show is based on an outdoor spectacular that actually happens at Montréal's mountainside St. Joseph's Oratory, and was, according to Arcand, the inspiration for his film.

Like Nathanael West's Miss Lonelyhearts, Daniel is initially amused by the prospect of directing Christ's story and playing the main character. But as he meticulously researches the most up-to-date historical data about the world's most mysterious man, (approaching the project the way ex-documentarian Arcand did), and as an interesting way to tell the story reveals itself to him. Daniel starts feeling inspired.

Eventually, Jesus of Montréal gets more than he bargained for—just like the original. A new tone comes into the film. A slightly spooky, born-again librarian (Paule Baillargeon) as Christ. The beat gets too fast for Martin, who goofs, worrying he's "Burt" and "Johnny" voices. But the dubbing director's voice immediately crackles on the p.a., "Don't worry. Nobody will notice any difference," making one of the film's many barbed comments from the World According to Arcand.

The mock pornography in this scene bounces off an earlier scene's shots of ham actors pontificating about their sins. These "religious" images appear on a video monitor belonging to Father Leclerc (Gilles Pelletier), a liltfing theatre buff who offers an opportunity to Jesus de Montréal's hero, Daniel Coulombe (Lothaire Bluteau), a young actor who needs work.

Father Leclerc wants Daniel to "modernize" The Stations of the Cross; a passion play staged on summer nights for gaggles of tourists in tennis skirts and Bermuda shorts. The priest's show is based on an outdoor spectacular that actually happens at Montréal's mountainside St. Joseph's Oratory, and was, according to Arcand, the inspiration for his film.

Like Nathanael West's Miss Lonelyhearts, Daniel is initially amused by the prospect of directing Christ's story and playing the main character. But as he meticulously researches the most up-to-date historical data about the world's most mysterious man, (approaching the project the way ex-documentarian Arcand did), and as an interesting way to tell the story reveals itself to him. Daniel starts feeling inspired.
the form of a smooth entertainment lawyer (Yves Jacques).

Worst of all, Daniel is betrayed by Father Leclerc, who like a movie producer turning Paule Filiaguais, Jean-Louis Millette, Monique Miller, Tremblay, deeply disturbing episodes. Arcand’s movie, Caron, rises twice in a chain of ludicrous, ironic, and the actors.

Production

end with no clear resolution to the mystery of it's beautifully acted, designed, and filmed (by Guy Dufaux and Patrick Foulon) project.

However, neither disguise where they character development and lack of focus in the script. Moreover, neither disguise where they were shot and both were released in Toronto during the same week. As far as this reviewer can remember, this has never happened before.

Palais Royale is the most stylish of the two, but also the weaker. Billed as a “romantic remembrance,” it is neither very funny nor is there a real romance. Set in “Toronto’s Good,” circa 1959, Gerald Price (Matt Craven) is a clerk with small-town roots and big-time ambitions. He’s a hustler who dreams of running his own agents and of the blonde on the billboards for Royal cigarettes. Shortly then you can say that the audience might have for a small-town girl. Odessa Mulkoom (played by Kim Cattrall) by way of Marilyn Monroe on a street corner and immediately makes it pass a her.

Getting nowhere, he nonetheless manages to track her down at the Palais Royale, an art deco dance hall on Lake Ontario, where it seems all the best of the Toronto underworld meet for a bit of R & R.

Before long, there is a sensible killing and Gerald literally finds himself lying on top of his dream, having saved her life. She lures him into her world of cheap things and even cheaper hotel rooms. She is a hustler, she gets slapped around by her bullying boyfriend Tony (Kim Coates) who is working for the local mob boss, Michael D’Antonio (played by Stockwell). He is a man of power who dreams of running his own ad.

There is murder in Palais Royale ("This whole town is small-time"). Says Tony, trying to convince Odessa to run away with him. “I should get to Buffalo.”, and both Gerald and Tony have it off with Odessa. But the laughs are slight and the sex surprisingly sexless. The audience is expected to go with Gerald’s naivete enthusiasm and big dreams, but the script doesn’t allow us to really know him or care about his dreams. Odessa never rises above the level of a cheap tart despite Cattrall’s limited efforts to give her character some class. Her Monroe mannerisms and shrill nature deflect any sort of sympathy the audience might have for a small-town girl trying to survive in the big bad city. The rest of the things and cops are one-dimensional, except for Stockwell who ignores a few sparks in his role as a distinctly respectable crime lord. Unfortunately, he is only given a couple of key scenes.

Palais Royale was premiered at last year’s Festival of Festivals, but was subsequently re-edited and restored. It remains clumsy and almost completely without suspense. A nicely appointed period piece, full of sleazy gowns and big-finned cars, it’s all dressed up with no place to go. Martin Lavut’s direction is uninspired and only occasionally do his images rise above the ordinary. He ends up dwelling on Cattrall’s face, but unlike Monroe, she can’t carry the film on the sheer force of her personality. She has none.

The idea of a mob film in Toronto set in the ’50s is certainly an appealing idea, but the end result lacks of too many fingers in the creative pie. Hugh Graham is a talented and funny writer whose material used to be held on a regular basis on CBC Radio’s Morningside. Apparently he worked two years on the script, but somewhere along the way the focus got lost. The producers went for an expensive look and the easy clichés, and Palais Royale ends up being victim of a lot of wrong choices.

Buying Time shares a lot in common with Palais Royale, apart from Dean Stockwell. Both are about young men who get involved with