

never feel any kind of interaction between the characters and the symbolic nature surrounding them (which is supposed to provoke their union). We perceive André and Hortense as two separate, though parallel entities that never really mingle with each other. That's too bad because the technical quality of *La Nuit avec Hortense* is quite remarkable. Chabot juxtaposes color and black and white film to evoke the two different worlds of reality and of André's dream, a simple idea – though perhaps over-used – but very effective here. Sometimes, the black and white tones reflect in the colors and vice versa, especially in the water scenes which wash almost everything out to reveal only neutral colors and harsh shadows of night, almost as if the real and unreal were coming together in moments of pure magic.

The beauty that Chabot has given the images, through their grainy texture and appealing contrasts, is certainly one of the interesting aspects of the film. The actors, too, do their share in trying to bring the film to life. Carole Laure finally succeeds in giving a certain weight to a character by playing it simple, thus helping to keep Hortense's mystery intact. Lothaire Bluteau, unfortunately, didn't have enough material to sink his teeth into.

But *La Nuit avec Hortense* has problems in the orchestration of all these artistic and technical elements. They are not organized in any way that brings us to some deeper understanding. Chabot begins beautifully, and his ending is also worthwhile, but the rest of the film just doesn't work. The lesson learned from *La Nuit avec Hortense* is that it is decidedly not easy to make a good lyrical film.

Claire Valade •

LA NUIT AVEC HORTENSE p. Nicole Lamothe d. Jean Chabot sc. Jean Chabot d.o.p. Daniel Jobin art d. Normand Sarrazin ed. Claude Beaugrand mus. Richard Desjardins l.p. Carole Laure, Lothaire Bluteau, Paul Hébert, Germain Houde, Marcel Sabourin, Louise Forestier, Denis Bouchard, Michel Barrette, Karen Racicot. Produced by Les Ateliers Audio-Visuels du Québec. Distributed by Astral Films.



Hortense (Carole Laure) and André (Lothaire Bluteau)

François Bouvier's
and Jean Beaudry's
**Les Matins
Infidèles
(Unfaithful
Mornings)**

Marc and Jean-Pierre, friends and fellow baby-boomers, are unequally committed to the project they ostensibly share. Marc (Jean Beaudry) is writing a novel based on the photographs taken by Jean-Pierre (Denis Bouchard) of an undistinguished street corner in Montreal. The deal is that Jean-Pierre will provide a daily shot of the corner (taken at exactly 8 a.m.) for a period of one year.

However, Jean-Pierre soon begins to cheat, winding back the clock in the window of the café, (which appears in each photograph), whenever he misses the appointed time. Worse yet, he skips weeks at a time and compensates with a series of phony shots which he submits to Marc. To complete the assault on the assumed purity of artistic inspiration, he also takes liberties with the composition of the supposedly candid photo by imposing his own *mise-en-scène*.

Jean-Pierre's unfaithfulness to the creative pact is interwoven with his unfaithfulness to his loved ones. He ditches his lover/photographic assistant, Julie, (played by Violaine Forest), after meeting another woman while photographing the street corner. She, too, is sloughed off by Jean-Pierre when she becomes pregnant; he even sheds his car, abandoning it on the street when it has outlived its usefulness. And when the landlord threatens Jean-Pierre for lack of payment, he adopts the time-honoured, Montreal tradition of the midnight move, clearing his things out of the apartment in the dead of night and imposing himself on Marc.

As played by the manic Bouchard (*Lance et compte, Jésus de Montréal*), Jean-Pierre is a cad – a charming cad, but a cad nonetheless. He blows the rent money up his nose and generally behaves without a whit of sensitivity to those around him. Jean-Pierre's one redeeming feature is his obvious devotion to his five-year-old boy. (He lets the kid paint on the walls while he snorts coke and watches hockey, the very model of the enlightened, Yuppie parent.)

Betrayal is omnipresent. Marc, already feeling betrayed by his partner, Pauline, (Louise Richer) – she leaves him in spite of their 'modern', open arrangement – realizes that Jean-Pierre is being unfaithful to the street-corner project. The purity of the original idea has been sullied by Jean-Pierre's lack of commitment and Marc's work on his novel



Marc (Jean Beaudry) working on the novel inspired by Jean-Pierre's photographs.

suffers. He is further betrayed by his colleagues at the university who give up their principled strike, leaving him alone on the picket line. He resigns in protest.

The only successful relationship portrayed in the film is one between father and son. But there, the indulgence so central to the relationship points mainly to the self-absorption the boomer generation brings to every aspect of life. This is, after all, the first generation to use the word "parent" as a verb, and the explosion of books and films on the subject would have us believe the concept has just been invented.

Co-writers and directors Bouvier and Beaudry (their first feature was the acclaimed *Jacques et Novembre*), in what is perhaps an ironic commentary on their own partnership, paint a portrait of two individuals whose collaboration is doomed by their personalities. Jean-Pierre is a "maudit irresponsable," as Marc tells him, while Marc, the politically correct, guilt-ridden college prof – in a fit of anger after Pauline leaves him, he kicks over a garbage can, only to come back and clean up the spilled contents – is a "hostie d'hypocrite" in Jean-Pierre's view.

Ultimately, it's next to impossible to have any sympathy for Jean-Pierre, and the contrived climax of the film (in which he sheds his life the way he's abandoned the constituent elements of it) is thus robbed of its potential impact. It's also hard to understand what drives the friendship between the two men, or between any two characters in the film for that matter (with the exception of the blood bond between father and son).

Les Matins Infidèles harks back to an earlier time in Quebec film when everybody was depressed, alienated, and unable to get any satisfaction. Back then it was due to not having reached maturity (read independence). Now, it's

supposedly a result of the comfort and indifference of the post-referendum era. (Which, I suppose, amounts to the same thing).

Technically, *Les Matins Infidèles* is assured. The acting is uniformly good; the photography and editing are of very high standard, and Michel Rivard's soundtrack adds greatly to every scene. The film contains some memorable images, but as a psychological exposé, it falls somewhat short of its goal. After raising a number of important questions about commitment (and its flipside, betrayal), and offering up some occasionally humorous insights into the creative process, *Les Matins Infidèles* settles down to the level of mere navel-gazing.

Frank Rackow •

LES MATINS INFIDÈLES (UNFAITHFUL MORNINGS) p. François Bouvier assoc. p. Marc Daigle d. /sc. Jean Beaudry, François Bouvier cam. Alain Dupras sd. Claude Beaugrand, Esther Auger set des. Karine Epp cost. Gaëtanne Lévesque ed. Jean Beaudry sd. ed. Claude Beaugrand mus. Michel Rivard 1st. a. d. Carle Delarochette-Verpet p. mgr. Claude Cartier casting/2nd a. d. Marquise Lepelletier cam. asst. Pierre Pelletier app. cam. Esther Valiquette standcam op. Alain Dupras, Steve Campanelli (Going Steady) addnl. cam. Eric Cayla boom Esther Auger, Catherine Van Der Donck asst. art d. Claude Laflamme, Jean-Luc Dequoy makeup Kathryn Casault, Lucille Demers gaffer Pierre Provost elec. Marc Charlebois, Denis Ménard key grip Philippe Palu grip Christian Bédard sp. fx. L'Intrigue unit mgr. Catherine Thabourin p. a. Andrée Bouvier, Jean-Paul Rémy, Edmond Delorimier asst. ed. Suzanne Boullier ed. cons. Yves Chaput, André Corriveau asst. sd. ed. Francine Poirier sd. fx. Jérôme Décarie asst. sd. fx. Monique Vézina loc. sd. Jocelyn Caron post. sync team. Diane Boucher, Annie Jean, André Turcot, Mathieu Roy-Décarie, Normand Belanger 2nd unit. : art d. Claude Poirier stills Pierre Dury key grip Eliot Deraspe, elec. Patrice Houx p. a. André Dupuy, Ann Langis mix. Michel Descombes asst. mix. Luc Boudrias l. p. Jean Beaudry, Denis Bouchard, Laurent Faubert-Bouvier, Violaine Forest, Louise Richer, Nathalie Coupal. dist. Aska Film International. A Lundi Matin Production with the participation of Telefilm Canada, SOGIC-Québec, and Radio Canada.