

FILM REVIEWS

Claude Lelouch's *A Nous Deux*

p./d./sc. Claude Lelouch asst. d. Jean-Claude Ventura, Roger De Monestrol ph. Bernard Zitzermann asst. cam. Bruno de Keyser, Michel Mandreau ed. Sophie Bhaud, Hugues Darmois sd. mix. Harald Maury cont. Lise Ferran, France Boudreau key grip Henri Cayrol grip Yves Fayt key gaf. Joël David a.d. Jean-Louis Poveda set design. Claude Marchand m. Francis Lai singing Fabienne Thibault lyrics Pierre Barouh cost. design. Marie-Françoise Perrochon wardrobe asst. Adrienne Bacou cast. Arlette Gordon make-up Alfonso Gola hair. Jean-Pierre Berroyer l.p. Catherine Deneuve, Jacques Dutronc, Jacques Villeret, Gérard Caillaud, Bernard Crommbey, Paul Préboist, Gilberte Geniat, Bernard Lecoq, Jean-François Rémi, Monique Melinand, Guy Retore, Marie-Pierre De Gérando, Karine, Xavier Saint-Macary, Evelyne Ker, Anne Jousset, Simon Lelouch, Olivier Lai, Natalie Caron, Jacques Godin, Émile Genest, Daniel Auteuil, Alain David, Jean-Paul Muel, Bunny Godillot, Myriam Mézières, Evelyne Gilbert p. Claude Lelouch, Denis Héroux, Joseph F. Beaubien, co. p. a Canadian-French co-production p. manager (France) Daniel Deschamps, (Canada) Justine Héroux unit man. (France) Dominique Lallier, (Canada) Micheline Garant p.c. Claude Lelouch, Denis Héroux and Joseph-F. Beaubien col. 35mm running time 90 min. dist. (Canada) Cine 360 Inc.



Momentary stand-in for Jacques Dutronc, director Claude Lelouch spells it out for Catherine Deneuve on location with *A Nous Deux*

and above all the moving camera elicit strong emotional responses, and the elliptical links between scenes prime one for some intellectual payoff. Yet, for all this emotive strength, there is no developed understanding of character or situation. When the film switches to present time, one is exposed to the most banal sociological determinism. "Like Father, like son," is the reductionistic formula upheld throughout. Simon Chassaing's crimes are constantly explained as a product of his family's past. When hiding Simon after his jail-break, Uncle Music says it reminds him of the time thirty years ago when he hid Simon's father. Simon is a crook because it's "natural."

The same false profundity characterizes the rest of the film. After a particularly savage rape, Françoise engages in a career of seducing prominent men, setting them up for the police to collect evidence of adultery. The "dime-store Freud" explanation of her motive cannot bear the weight of importance given it.

Introduced separately, these two characters are fated to meet. Again, a simple reductionistic quality informs the film. In a different setting Simon can escape the burdens of his past and find a new life in

"honesty" together with Françoise. Similarly, Françoise can get beyond her shattering experience through "honesty" with Simon.

The self-enclosed couple is a dubious romantic ideal, and Lelouch has difficulty in handling this content. He uses whatever emotive technique that first comes to mind, with little regard for formal integrity. His stylistic range simply provides a mixed bag of effects to draw upon. Consequently, the film is unified only by the love-and-chase plot.

The Canadian money that went into this co-production resulted in its strangest quirk. Why Québec is even mentioned when obviously New York was always envisaged as the city of freedom remains a mystery. The traditional border-crossing adds nothing, and the distant shot of New York appears distinctly un-New Yorkish. One wonders if it might not, in fact, be Montreal!

Also unfortunate are the film's references to Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*. The comparison to that famous couple's adventures only emphasizes the essentially hollow experience of *A Nous Deux*.

Mark Mercer

For whatever reasons, films from all genres and filmmaking cultures have been constructed around the exploits of a man and a woman who share adventures and come to love each other. Recently, this includes many interesting love-on-the-run crime dramas. Unfortunately, the promise of something interesting, suggested by the early moments of Claude Lelouch's *A Nous Deux*, is soon dissipated when the couple comes together and starts running. For all its cinematic show and flash, *A Nous Deux* is a destitute film. Lelouch has the technique — as one would expect from a director who was initially a cinematographer — but in this film at least, that technique is confined to gaudy flourishes. The film itself has no real substance, and is constantly plagued by a lack of stylistic integrity.

A Nous Deux begins in France in the 1950's among gangsters who have become rich during the occupation. The opening sequences are gripping — a piano sing-song, the Marquise's face slapped, a brutal retaliation. The music, setting,