

**STRAND
RELEASING**

presents

ON A MAGICAL NIGHT

A FILM BY
CHRISTOPHE HONORÉ

Starring Chiara Mastroianni and Vincent Lacoste

PRESS NOTES

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Cannes Film Festival – Un Certain Regard
COLCOA French Film Festival
Rendez-Vous with French Cinema New York
Chicago International Film Festival

Country of Origin: France, Luxembourg, Belgium
Format: DCP / 1:1.85 / Color
Sound: Dolby 5.1 Surround
Running Time: 90 minutes
Genre: Drama
Not Rated
In French with English Subtitles

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SYNOPSIS

In this playful new film from writer-director Christophe Honoré, we meet Maria, a woman dissatisfied with her marriage who, after a heated argument with her husband of 20 years, spends the night in room 212 of the hotel across the street from their home. There, she has a bird's eye view of her apartment, her husband, and her marriage. In this comic romp, she confronts her past lovers and relationships on one magical night, fantasizing about the lives she could've lived and wondering if she's made the right decisions.

CHRISTOPHE HONORÉ BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1970 in Brittany, Christophe Honoré has written some thirty children's books, mainly published at L'École des Loisirs, and he was awarded the Baobab Award at the 2011 Montreuil Boik Fair for *La règle d'or du cache-cache*, published by Actes Sud Junior, in collaboration with illustrator Gwen Le Gac.

He also wrote novels published by Editions de l'Olivier, including *L'Infamille* (1997), *La Douceur* (1999), *Scarborough* (2002) and *Le livre pour enfants* (2005). Very recently, *Ton Père* (2018) was published by Mercure de France.

He collaborated in the writing of several scripts for Jean-Pierre Limosin (*Novo*, 2003), Gaël Morel (*Three dancing slaves*, 2004, *Après lui*, 2007), Diastème (*Sunny Spells*, 2008), Mickaël Buch (*Let my people go!*, 2011), Louis Garrel (*Two Friends*, 2014).

He started directing in 2002, with *Seventeen Times Cécile Cassard*, and then *Ma Mère* (2004), *Dans Paris* (2006), *Love Songs* (2009), in competition at the Cannes Film Festival. He adapted novel *La Princesse de Clèves* in *The Beautiful Person* (2008), followed by *Making plans for Lena* (2009), *Man at Bath*, *The Beloved* (2011), *Métamorphoses* (2014), *Sophie's Misfortunes* (2016), and *Sorry Angel* (2018) in competition at the Cannes Film Festival.

In the theatre, he directed his own texts: *Les Débutantes* (1998), *Beautiful guys* (2004), *Dionysos Impuissant* (Avignon 2005), *Nouveau Roman* (Avignon 2012), *Fin de l'Histoire* (2015), and has adapted Victor Hugo's *Angelo, Tyran de Padoue* (Avignon 2009). In the autumn of 2018, he created a new play, *Les Idoles*, 4 times nominee at the Molières Awards.

In October of 2013, he directed his first opera, Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, in the Lyon Opera house, followed by Debussy's *Pelleas and Melisande* (Lyon, 2014), Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* (2016, Aix-en-Provence Festival), and Verdi's *Don Carlos* (Lyon, 2018). He is currently rehearsing *Tosca*, which will premiere at the Aix-en-Provence Festival on July 4th, 2019. He will direct Marcel Proust's *The Guermantes Way* in the Spring of 2020 with the Theatrical troupe of the Comédie-Française.

ROOM ON EVERY FLOOR – Christophe Honoré

The Swiss antechamber

As often, “On a Magical Night” proceeds from another film, which has not been shot, barely been written, but which is its secret source. I had entitled it “Les Fleurs” (The Flowers). The story was set during the Occupation, then in the 50’s. There was an imaginary painter, a piano, the Picardie region, the Opéra Garnier and two female characters who were keeping a secret that they could not access themselves. I gave up on that project that came up after the release of “Plaire, Aimer, et Courir vite” (“Sorry Angel”), for fear that it would take me to an overly solemn level. I am more and more distrustful of this importance, this sort of domination that some films command to cinema itself. I am distrustful of authoritative subjects and towering directors. In a word, I did not want this overly respectable project that I was beginning to dream of. It was the beginning of the summer, I was at Lake Geneva, settled at the Vidy Theater rehearsing “Les Idoles”, a show that was closing a three-part autobiographical fiction project. I was in no hurry for the next film and honestly, I felt almost liberated not having any idea in my mind when one night I found myself watching Leo McCarey’s “The Awful Truth”: Irene Dunne and Cary Grant as an infallible married couple after their divorce. How long have you been in a relationship, I start wondering? And quickly after: how many filmmakers have taken an interest in the subject of conjugal conversation? That very night, I started writing with impatience and joy.

The Green Room

Proust said that “The writers we admire cannot be our guides, because we have within ourselves something like a magnetic needle or a carrier pigeon, the sense of our direction.” I believe it is the same with filmmakers. It is not that easy to deviate from our personal path. We may think that such sequence shot in the style of, such line borrowed from others, will make the film in the making a deconstructed piece – or at least built by several people – that happily escape our little territory, but it does not. A lonely, tenacious and overwhelming wave takes the film away, and us with it, to a promised and unexpected land. Other people’s films are often but landscapes you cross paths with and on which you cast glances right and left, feeling both surprised and reassured to find the same idea, the same movement as the one you’re shooting with. And it is a soft joy to feel less lonely in your obsessions, in your dead-ends, to verify that others before us have tried to express the same sensation, the same feeling. We continue on our way, a little less worried, carried by the hope of ending up a little more universal than we thought. Writing and shooting “On a Magical Night”, I often came across the films of Sacha Guitry, Ingmar Bergman, Woody Allen, and each of them, without knowing it, and with a sense of brotherhood that I was the only one to feel, has allowed me to grasp the specific appearance of this new film.

The Room with a View

I wanted “On a Magical Night” to express, in a sentimental and stubborn way, my attachment to fiction cinema where “let’s pretend” has more value than the “let’s do it as it is”. Here, I mean fiction in the sense of enchantment. I have let myself been swept along in a dance with

forgotten steps, charmed by its spells. And little by little, it appeared to me that it was not nothing, in this day and age, to claim the precious tools of acting, of metaphor, to favor the magic of backstage, of tricks, in a work that aims to make life happen during a film. Nabokov wrote: "To call a story a true story is an insult to both art and truth". From the very beginning, I wanted my story to look like a conjugal tale more than a report on couples.

The Love Room

"You should not forget that I have been twenty-five and that you loved me madly when I was that age!" For years, I have gotten my bearings in life from the love stories that punctuated it. "It was back in the days of X or in the days of Y", my year-long, month-long or night-long romances seemed to be the highest points of my existence... Then I started making films, and the films replaced the romances, at least as time markers. "Before or after *Love Songs?*" ... "During the post-production of *Making Plans for Lena* or during the preparation of *Man at Bath?*" ... I note that the more I shot, the more my love stories started taking their time. As if romantic faithfulness allowed me to multiply projects. I am aware that it is arbitrary, and maybe irrelevant to bring up these two words, truthfulness and films. And yet, I am quite tempted to claim that loving lengthily (oh, the atrocious adverb) has certainly allowed me to shoot often.

The Guest House

"Thus play I in one person many people, and none contented". I believe that this Shakespeare verse, that John Irving borrowed for the title of one of his novels, defines quite well the initial mystery in that story. Let's pretend a woman, Maria, one night had the revelation that she has the gift of seeing how there are always more people around her than it seems. Her husband, Richard, is also Richard her young fiancé, and Richard the teenager she did not know. Her rival Irene is also Irene the role model of her future life. Her lover Asdrubal is all of her lovers in one person... Maria would be like a fixed star that would attract satellites around her that keep multiplying. The story follows the poisonous steps of this invasion and simultaneously builds with Maria the antidote to escape them. Let's pretend that woman, Maria, experienced finding her voice among all the voices that block her.

The Room of One's Own

The more Maria would like to think about her life, the more her life turns out to be filled with protagonists who want to speak for her. Maria crossed a street, hoping for some perspective, to see herself from the outside, to see her apartment, her husband, her marriage from above. Yet now she is not facing loneliness, but the noisy group of people who claim they have suffered from her, her freedom, her desires. Among them, Maria is like a prisoner of more or less aggressive signs that she must interpret. I had been wanting to shoot a character thinking for a long time. And since I have also been wanting to shoot Chiara Mastroianni's anxious forehead and ironic dimples, I urgently started the production of this film.

The Room with 4 Beds

I have rarely come across such smiling and relaxed actors in the dressing rooms in the morning as I have during the shooting of “On a Magical Night”. Whatever the issues of the day – hairdressing, costumes, lines I had rewritten overnight, the winter, the food from the cafeteria – I can say that there was not one morning where I had the feeling that they would have preferred being anywhere else but here, in this lost studio in the middle of Luxembourg countryside, in the middle of nothing, with a director who kept on asking himself why he had decided a few weeks earlier not to shoot on location. And I don’t have much of an explanation for it except that they were shamefully sweet and exhaustingly kind: these four actors liked one another. In our great ideas about films and how cinema happens, we forget this essential, precious and rare element: the love that the actors feel for one another. The trust, the humor, the affection, the friendship between them, and how we directors are sometimes so lucky to capture these streams of joy they give us. This film owes everything to the health, kindness, tenderness, wildness and delicate and benevolent warmth of Vincent Lacoste, Benjamin Biolay, Camille Cottin and Chiara Mastroianni.

CAST

Maria	Chiara Mastroianni
Richard 25-year-old	Vincent Lacoste
Irène Haffner	Camille Cottin
Richard	Benjamin Biolay
La Volonté	Stéphane Roger
Asdrubal	Harrison Arevalo
With the exceptional participation of	Carole Bouquet

CREW

Written and Directed by	Christophe Honoré
Casting	Matieu Telinhos
Assistant Director	Marie Doller
Chief Cameraman	Rémy Chevrin
Costume Supervisor	Olivier Beriot
Chief Editor	Chantal Hymans
Sound Engineer	Carlo Thoss
Sound Editor	Valérie de Loof, Angelo Dos Santos
Sound Mixer	Nicolas Leroy, Agnès Ravez
Chief Make Up	Thomas Gauder
Chief Hairdresser	Fabienne Adam
Director of Production	Jane Milon
Control Room	Pauline Seigland
	Ambroise Gayet
	Clotilde Martin

A production by	Les Filmes Pelléas – Philippe Martin et David Thion
In coproduction with	Bidibul Productions – Lilian Eche et Christel Henon
	Scope Pictures – Geneviève Lemal
	France 2 Cinéma
With the participation of	Film Fund Luxembourg
	Canal +
	Ciné +
	France Télévisions
	Memento Films Distribution
In association with	Cinémage 14
	La Banque Postale Image 12 et 13
With the participation of	Wallimage (La Wallonie)
International Sales	Charades

Distributed by Strand Releasing

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