

**STRAND
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Presents

From the Director of Zero Patience and The Making of Monsters comes ...

Winner of the AUDIENCE AWARD

1997 San Francisco International

Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

Winner of the GRAND JURY PRIZE

OUTFEST '97, Los Angeles

Lilies

New 4K Restoration supervised by Director John Greyson

PRESS NOTES

Country of Origin: Canada

Format: DCP/1.85 /Color

Sound: Stereo

Running Time: 96 minutes

Genre: Romance, Drama, LGBTQIA

Not Rated

In English with English SDH

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SYNOPSIS

Lilies is an emotionally intense, suspense-laden tale of love, betrayal and revenge in which oneman's past comes back to haunt him.

In 1952, a Catholic bishop (MARCEL SABOURIN) makes an exceptional visit to a federal penitentiary to hear a dying inmate's last confession. In the prison chapel, he is surprised to see a number of prisoners there, in prayer. At the urging of the Chaplain (IAN D. CLARK) he gives them his blessing and proceeds to the confessional to complete his mission. The prisoner in the confessional is Simon (AUBERT PALLASCIO), a childhood friend of the Bishop. Simon has more than confessing on his mind. The confessional door is locked from the outside, and Bishop Bilodeau is suddenly a hostage. The prisoners transform the altar into a theatrical stage, and they change from their uniforms into makeshift costumes. They begin to re-enact a story of Simon's which tells of events that took place forty years earlier in the village where both he and Bilodeau lived as teenagers. The Bishop is forced to watch the drama which unfolds before him. The action moves back and forth, seamlessly through time, between the crude prison presentation of 1952 and what appear to be the actual events of 1912.

In 1912, their village of Roberval in northern Quebec is visited by the wealthy from North America and abroad including European aristocracy, such as Baron (ROBERT LALONDE) and Baroness de Hue (REMY GIRARD). The young Bilodeau and Simon are 18-years-old. Under the direction of Father St. Michel, played by the Chaplain, Young Simon (JASON CADIEUX) stars as Saint Sebastian in the school play with fellow student Vallier de Tilly (DANNY GILMORE). Their rehearsal is becoming passionate, and it seems clear that their friendship is a romantic one, when a jealous young Bilodeau (MATTHEW FERGUSON) interrupts.

Vallier's mother, the Countess de Tilly (BRENT CARVER) witnesses what transpires when she comes to find Vallier and take him to view the arrival of a hot air balloon. The Countess is so delighted by the rehearsal, impressed by what she believes is the audacity of Father St. Michel's staging, that she naively tells Simon's father, Timothee (GARY FARMER) about the passionate performance. Distressed by what he hears, Timothee storms off to give his son a lesson of his own. He finds Simon in the school attic and brutally whips him, leaving scars that will be there for the rest of his life.

At the same moment, Lydie-Anne (ALEXANDER CHAPMAN), an exotic woman from France, arrives in the hot air balloon, much to the delight of townsfolk. She stays at the Hotel Roberval, located on the shore of Lac St. Jean, a large lake famous for its fishing and golden waters.

In this romantic setting, Simon and Lydie-Anne meet and spend their days together becoming engaged at the end of the summer. Young Bilodeau grows envious now not only of Vallier but Lydie-Anne, too. He tries, unsuccessfully to get Simon to come with him to the seminary. Vallier, determined to confront Simon, interrupts the engagement party to entertain the guests by performing the St. Sebastian play which they had rehearsed at school.

The bittersweet love triangle ultimately crescendos in tragedy, and the Bishop is forced to remember events which he had buried forty years earlier. He reveals the truth and provides the ending to Simon's story which he has so desperately needed for over forty years.

RESTORATION NOTE
FROM DIRECTOR JOHN GREYSON

Restoring LILIES was a surprisingly emotional experience for us. We were lucky enough to be able to work in person with brilliant Ryan Randall and Susan Lord at their extraordinary Vulnerable Media Lab (located at Queens University), with Ryan overseeing the 6k scan of a clean 35mm print of Lilies that we borrowed from TIFF's Film Reference Library.

Working so intimately with celluloid and its idiosyncrasies again, experiencing the sweep of Daniel Jobin's lush cinematography and Sandy Kybartas' brilliant design magic -- all this plunged us back onto the set of our Montreal shoot, nearly thirty years ago, and the intense joys of working on this ambitious magic-realist period film with our large Ontario/Quebec cast and crew. So many firsts for me personally: first time directing someone else's script; first time shooting in Quebec; first time shooting on 35mm!; first balloon landing!

Seeing all those raw close-ups of the beautiful actors we've since lost -- including Aubert Pallascio (Older Simon) and especially the shimmering tender pain of Brent Carver's Countess -- they made me think in turn about that moment three decades ago, and all the queer artistic and cultural debates of that time... and the deft, wise and surprisingly whimsical contributions that Michel Marc's script (in Linda Gaboriau's exquisite English version) contributed, particularly to questions of desire and gender.

And then -- at the grading stage -- we were so extremely fortunate to work with Alter Ego and their senior colour grader Andrew Ross, who brought such careful nuance to the emotional journey of the film, walking an exacting tightrope between the cool and the warm, the romantic and the surreal. Inside the session, I'd find myself caught up once again in the sheer wild youth of our story, hearts not just on sleeve but in fists and

on the ground, lending such tragic weight to the two interlocking triangles: Jason Cadieux, Danny Gilmore, Matthew Ferguson, and Alexander Chapman, respectively playing Young Simon, Vallier, Young Bilodeau and Lydie-Anne. Their choices, their close-ups, their brash emotions: Lilies was once again working its aching magic for all of us, even after all this time, and we found ourselves tearing up more than a few times.

Michel Marc and Linda, producers Anna Stratton, Robin Cass and Arnie Gelbart, the whole team -- we're all are very grateful to everyone who made this restoration possible -- and excited (nervous!) to be sharing this restoration with a new generation (and then we'll see where our conversations lead us!)

-- John Greyson

BIOGRAPHIES

DIRECTOR | JOHN GREYSON

In Lilies, the era of 1912 begins with a performance by Simon and Vallier of the story of the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian. For director John Greyson, this marks the return to an early theme. "The Visitation", one of his first videos, tells the story of St. Sebastian. An award-winning film and video director, John Greyson was drawn to the script by the idea of showing priests and schoolboys who were desiring and profane, but also sacred. "The most subversive thing about Lilies is its refusal to be sacrilegious. It was never meant to be sacrilegious. It is romantic. It's a film for anyone who has ever been young and in love." During the past 15 years, he has made over 20 films and videos which have been presented at hundreds of festivals and venues around the world and won major prizes. His first feature, "Urinal", won the Best Gay Feature Film award at the 1989 Berlin Festival, and "The Making of Monsters" won Best Short Film award at the Berlin and Toronto Festivals in 1991. In 1994, Greyson's "Zero Patience", the musical satire about the scapegoats of the AIDS epidemic, created an international sensation, and went on to international distribution. As a video artist, Greyson's many productions include such award-winning works as "The Kipling Trilogy", "You Taste American", "The Ads Epidemic", and "The Pink Pimpernel." As a teacher and writer, he co-edited the 1993 Routledge anthology Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video and recently published a collection of writings entitled Urinal and Other Stories. He was honored with the Gay Times Jack Babuscio Award at the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival in 1994 for his outstanding contribution to lesbian and gay cinema.

For Greyson, who has written all of his previous films, he describes not writing Lilies as

something of a freeing experience, where he became much more objective about directing. He is currently working on a couple of scripts, one for video, the other a film. He says, "In big terms, I hope to keep learning over the next 20 years. To do as many things as possible. I want more challenges, to keep making drama and documentaries and experimental films, my own and other scripts as well. It's a pretty big privilege to do all that. The best thing to do is to keep myself fresh. The biggest danger is putting yourself into a box. Hopefully, the really exciting stuff is when I'm 60!"

WRITER | MICHEL MARC BOUCHARD

Michel Marc Bouchard, who wrote *Lilies*, has a delightful cameo role in the film as the Photographer. In his native Quebec and around the world, Michel Marc Bouchard has achieved star status as a playwright. *Lilies* marks the first screenplay for the writer, who says about the two forms "A playwright is much freer than a screenwriter. Theatre is poor, so the writing is rich. Everything can be described, verbally, and writing relies on what is evoked. But cinema is illustration. So, as a much richer medium, the writer becomes more humble and modest." But during the shooting of *Lilies*, Bouchard had little to be modest about. 1995 was truly a banner year for the writer who had numerous productions of his works appearing in different parts of the world.

Virtually every member of the film crew, upon signing on, remarked how moved they were by the script. And while the film shot, Bouchard's most recent play, "Le Voyage du couronnement", opened to critical acclaim at Le Theatre du nouveau monde, marking the first Quebec play to launch the prestigious theatre's fall season in a dozen years.

Several months before *Lilies* went before the camera, Bouchard had two runaway summer hits: "Les Grandes chaleurs", and "Le Desir", which went on to be nominated for a Soiree des Masques, the Quebec theatre award for Best New Play.

Midway through production, Bouchard was off to Europe, where his "Les Muses d'orphelines", the tremendous 1994 success which had just completed its second run at the Theatre d'aujourd'hui and went on to tour Quebec, opened in Italy and Belgium.

And as for "Les Feluettes", the original play upon which *Lilies* is based, it was continuing its international career, with a run in Australia and its U.S. premiere scheduled in Santa Cruz. From its first performance in Montreal in 1987, "Les Feluettes" was a huge success. It went on to win rave reviews in Paris, and three Dora Mavor Moore Awards for its English-language run in Toronto. The original production of "Les Feluettes" was presented by Theatre Petit a Petit under the direction of Andre Brassard. Michel Marc Bouchard has written numerous plays, all critically acclaimed, including "L'Histoire de l'Oie" ("The Tale of Teeka"), a touching tale about the hereditary nature of family violence which won a Governor General's Award. Triptych Media and Galafilm are currently developing the English and French-language versions for television.

COMPOSER | MYCHAEL DANNA

Composing for *Lilies* took Mychael Danna back to his earliest roots in music, singing in choirs. The score was composed for the extraordinary voices of one of the world's foremost choral groups, The Hilliard Ensemble, and includes eleven original pieces based on the Latin mass, the "Ordinary of the Mass" or the "Mass for the Dead". One of the pieces, "Ave Verum Corpus" is sung by boy soprano, Kenan Burrows, of the Winchester Cathedral choir. The choral works were adapted for instruments and are also played by Kirk Heatherington on cello and Robert Grim on trumpet. The choral music was recorded in the medieval acoustical space of the Boxgrove Priory, built in the early 12th century near present day Chichester in southern England. With Daniel Pellerin of Deluxe Toronto, Mychael Danna mixed the music to retain the unique sound of these recordings but shaped them to replicate the space of the prison chapel where the film is set. Mychael Danna is the leading composer of music for Canadian films, a reputation based largely upon his work for director, Atom Egoyan. Danna made his film scoring debut with his music for Egoyan's "Family Viewing" (1987), an effort that earned the composer his first Genie nomination from the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television. Danna and Egoyan collaborated again on "Speaking Parts" (1989), "The Adjuster" (1991), a segment of "Montreal vu part" (1992) and the television film, "Gross Misconduct" (1992). The director/composer association reached an artistic peak with the release of "Exotica", the winner of the International Critics' Prize at the 1994 Cannes Film Festival and the recipient of eight Genies including awards for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Music Score. Some of Danna's other notable film credits include "Termini Station" (1989) directed by Allan King, "Cold Comfort" (1989) directed by Vic Sarin, Bruce McDonald's "Dance Me Outside" (1994) and Sullivan Film's popular television series "Road to Avonlea". Mychael Danna is also an internationally recognized recording artist, having created several instrumental concept albums inspired by the environment, including "North of Niagara", "Skies" and "Summerland" with Tim Clemont.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Translator Linda Gaboriau, created the English Version of the screenplay of *Lilies* from its original French Version written by Michel Marc Bouchard.

Linda Gaboriau has developed a long-standing relationship with many Quebec playwrights as the chief translator of their work into English. Her work with Michel Marc Bouchard was integral in *Lilies*' multi-award winning status as a landmark Canadian play. Her contribution to the screenplay for *Lilies* is equally considerable. The following excerpt is from the late Stephen Godfrey's article on her work as a translator in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, January 26, 1991:

"Closer to home was Gaboriau's struggle to find a proper title for LES FELUETTES, Bouchard's flamboyant romantic drama about homosexuality, religion and hypocrisy. The English title is Lilies, though it is by no means a synonym. 'Felurette is a word someone of an older generation might use, a Quebec distortion of the word fluet or flurette, which means frail or delicate,' Gaboriau explains. A mother might say it about a consumptive child, but it could mean effeminate or effete. It isn't necessarily pejorative.

So what do we do? We eliminate pansies, fairies, queers, or the literal The delicate ones, which doesn't quite make it. I went back to the play again, and saw how many Biblical allusions there were. I began thinking of lilies of the field, the fleur de lys and lilies as the flower of royalty (in the play, a French Countess finds herself stuck in Quebec). The play has a lot of the flamboyance of Oscar Wilde, who created a cult for lilies ... Artists right up to Robert Mapplethorpe have drawn sexual imagery from lilies. It seemed to capture the same kind of allusive meaning as felurette, and may make some subconscious impact on the audience ... '

CAST

The Countess	BRENT CA.RYER
The Bishop	MARCEL SABOURIN
Older Simon	AUBERT PALLASCIO
Simon	JASON CADIEUX
Vallier	DANNY GILMORE
Young Bilodeau	MATTHEW FERGUSON
Lydie-A.nne	A.LEX.ANDER CHAPMAN
The Baroness	REMY GIRARD
The Baron	ROBERT LALONDE
Chaplain/Father St. Michael.	IAN D. CLARK
Timothee	GARY FARMER

CREW

Director	JOHN GREYSON
Writer	MICHEL MARC BOUCHARD
Producers	ANNA STRATTON
ROBIN CASS	
ARNIE GELBART	
English Version	INDA GABORIAU
Director of Photography	DANIELJOBIN

Production Designer SANDRA KYBARTAS
Costume Designer LINDA MUIR
Editor ANDRE CORRIVEAU
Composer M YCHAEL DANNA
Sound DesignerJANE TATTERSALL
Art Director MARIE-CAROLE DE BEAUMONT
1st Assistant Director LOUIS-PHILIPPE ROCHON
Production Manager MURIEL LIZE
Casting Director DOROTHY GARDNER

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