

ANOTHER VIEW
KARLOVY VARY
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
2012

OFFICIAL
SELECTION
MILL VALLEY
FILM FESTIVAL 2012

MUMBAI
FILM FESTIVAL
2012

FESTIVAL DU
NOUVEAU CINÉMA
2012

NOMINATED BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
ACHIEVEMENT IN MUSIC - ORIGINAL SCORE
ACHIEVEMENT IN OVERALL SOUND
ACHIEVEMENT IN VISUAL EFFECTS
CANADIAN SCREEN AWARDS 2013



JACQUES
LANGURAND

CAROLINE
DHAVERNAS

PAUL
AHMARANI

ROBERT
LEPAGE

Mars & Avril

a film by
MARTIN VILLENEUVE



A FILM BY
MARTIN VILLENEUVE

Genre: SCIENCE-FICTION
Format: 90 MIN. / COUL. / 2:35 / RED
ORIGINAL FRENCH VERSION / ENGLISH SUBTITLED

LEAD ROLES

Jacob Obus: JACQUES LANGUIRAND
Avril: CAROLINE DHAVERNAS
Arthur Spaak: PAUL AHMARANI
Eugène Spaak: ROBERT LEPAGE

PRODUCERS

ANNE-MARIE GÉLINES, BENOÎT BEAULIEU, MARTIN VILLENEUVE

ARTISTIC & TECHNICAL CREDITS

Written by: MARTIN VILLENEUVE
Cinematographer: BENOÎT BEAULIEU
Production Designer: FRANÇOIS SCHUITEN
Visual Effects: VISION GLOBALE
VFX Supervisor: CARLOS MONZON
Art Direction: MARTIN TESSIER, PATRICK SIOUI, ELISABETH WILLIAMS
Costumes: MARIANE CARTER
Editor: MATHIEU DEMERS
Sound Designer: OLIVIER CALVERT
Sound Mixer: LUC BOUDRIAS
Original Score: BENOÎT CHAREST
Artistic Consultant: ROBERT LEPAGE

ADAPTED FROM THE GRAPHIC NOVEL
“MARS & AVRIL”, VOL. 1 & 2 [SID LEE & LA PASTÈQUE]
BY MARTIN VILLENEUVE

PRODUCTION

MARS ET AVRIL INC. / EMA FILMS

amg@emafilms.com

EMA films



“A trippy sci-fi fable about the musicality of the universe that’s set in Montreal and on the Red Planet, the sumptuously designed *Mars & Avril* is certainly one of a kind.”

Boyd van Hocij, VARIETY

Based on an acclaimed graphic novel, *Mars & Avril* is set in Montreal of the future, at the dawn of the first human landing on Mars, and tells the story of a musician who becomes obsessed with his muse.

Synopsis

Adapted from two acclaimed graphic novels, *Mars & Avril* is set in a futuristic Montreal, where humanity is about to set foot on Mars. JACOB OBUS (Jacques Languirand), a charismatic musician, takes pride in slowing down time by playing instruments inspired by women's bodies, designed by his friend, ARTHUR (Paul Ahmarani). A love triangle develops when Jacob and Arthur both fall in love with AVRIL (Caroline Dhavernas), a young photographer. Enter EUGÈNE SPAAK (Robert Lepage), inventor, cosmologist and Arthur's father, who unveils a new theory about man's desire to reach Mars and helps Jacob find the true meaning of life and love.

Mars & Avril



JACOB OBUS, Jacques Languirand

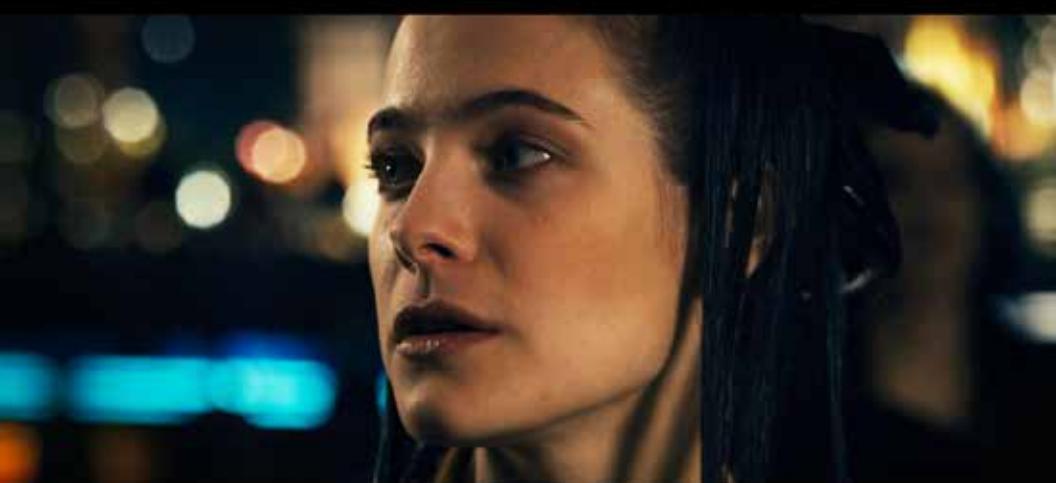


The famous and charismatic leader of a popular musical group, Jacob is above all a complex character haunted by many paradoxes. He captivates his fans with his sensual music, but lives trapped by his own image as a legendary lover. His facade hides a vulnerable, impressionable man, terrified by sexuality, speed, virtuality, time forever slipping away and death. Nostalgic by nature, Jacob is the founder of the anti-cybernetic movement. When he is on stage, he finds refuge in a bubble where time stops and where sexuality is sublimated by music.

In addition to his career in radio, where audiences have appreciated him for forty years, Jacques Languirand has made an acclaimed comeback as an actor in the three plays of Robert Lepage's Shakespeare cycle. He also appeared in various films, including *La Vie d'un héros*, *Le Grand Serpent du Monde*, *J'en suis* and *L'Odyssée d'Alice Tremblay*. As an author, he has written a number of books of various kinds, including a novel, a humourous book, eleven plays, two travelogues, a few essays and numerous popularization works.

Mars & Avril

AVRIL, Caroline Dhavernas



Avril is Jacob's latest muse... and the first female Marsonaute! Beautiful, mysterious, bright and impetuous, she is the object of desire. However, as a photographer, she is also an observer. A nostalgic artist, she uses her old camera to feed her personal obsession with the idea of emptiness. Despite her youth, Avril is short of breath, while Jacob, on the contrary, enjoys the strength of his powerful lungs despite his old age.

Born in Montreal, Caroline Dhavernas was 8 years-old when she began her career. She has appeared in many films and television series in Quebec, English Canada and the United States. For the past few years, she has been sharing her professional time between Montreal and New York City. Her best known films include *The Tulse Luper Suitcases*, *Hollywoodland*, *These Girls*, *Surviving My Mother*, *Passchendaele*, *Cry of the Owl* and *De père en flic*.

Mars & Avril

ARTHUR, Paul Ahmarani



Both egotistic and generous, Arthur is an ambiguous character. Working for Jacob, he draws musical instruments inspired by the female body, cooperating with his father, Eugène, who makes them. His relationship with his muses echoes that of painters and their models. He uses Jacob's popularity to attract them. Stimulated by the way others look at him, he boasts a confident demeanour that makes him a clever manipulator. He gives a concrete form to the musicality of his models and to aspects of their personality.

Since graduating from the Montreal Conservatory of Dramatic Arts in 1993, Paul Ahmarani has taken part in a variety of projects in theatre, television, film and music. He has worked with Cirque du Soleil, Théâtre de Quat'Sous, Omnibus, Théâtre du Rideau Vert, Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, Usine C and Théâtre Prospero. He appeared in numerous television series and films, and has worked with Oscar Nominated directors Kim Nguyen on *Le Marais*, and Philippe Falardeau on *La Moitié gauche du frigo* and *Congorama*.

Mars & Avril

EUGÈNE SPAAK, *Robert Lepage*



Eugène is an immortal being blessed with superior intuition and knowledge inaccessible to common people. An artisan, he crafts Jacob's musical instruments in his workshop, based on his son Arthur's sketches. He is also a cosmologist whose research into virtual technologies extends to bold experiments on himself. His head is actually a hologram, with all of his ideas, memories and thoughts stored electronically.

Director of the Quebec city-based theatre company Ex Machina, Robert Lepage is a Québécois theatre director, set designer, playwright, actor and filmmaker. Internationally acclaimed, he creates and stages original works that transform the traditional codes of theatrical representation, using state-of-the-art technology that allows him to develop new ways to write for the stage. Inspired by recent history, his modern and unique work transcends borders.

Mars & Avril

MARTIN VILLENEUVE – WRITER AND DIRECTOR



Martin Villeneuve studied Film at Concordia University and Graphic Design at Université du Québec à Montréal. In 2002, he received a grant from the Sid Lee Agency for the quality of his portfolio. For the next three years, he worked as an artistic director with the agency, especially for Cirque du Soleil. In this capacity, he helped create advertising campaigns for shows like *Zumanity*, *KÀ* and *Corteo*. A freelancer since 2005, he directed the TV advertising for the Cirque du Soleil shows *DELIRIUM* and *Saltimbanco*, as well as the website for the MGM Mirage's City Center real-estate project in Las Vegas. As an author, Martin Villeneuve has written and created both volumes of the graphic novels *Mars & Avril* (Sid Lee & la Pastèque, 2006), as well as the comic book *La voix du tonnerre* (Les 400 coups, 2004), which received enthusiastic acclaim and won many awards. He just completed his first feature film as writer-director-producer, *Mars & Avril*. The film, starring Jacques Languirand, Caroline Dhavernas, Paul Ahmarani and Robert Lepage, has recently been nominated for four Canadian Screen Awards.

Mars & Avril

ANNE-MARIE GÉLINAS – PRODUCER

Anne-Marie Gélinas founded EMAfilms in 2008 to produce independent films, documentaries and web-based media projects. She favours powerful and touching stories that target international audiences. Released in theatres in the Spring of 2012, the France/Canada/Israel co-production *A Bottle in the Gaza Sea* has received numerous prizes and nominations including 3 nominations for the Prix Lumières (the equivalent of the Golden Globe Awards) and is currently in the running for nominations at the 2013 César Awards in France. Anne-Marie also worked as line-producer on Kim Nguyen's critically acclaimed *Rebelle* produced by Item7 and which received, amongst others, the Silver Bear Award for Best Actress at Berlinale 2012, Best Film and Best Actress awards at Tribeca 2012 and a 2013 Oscar Nomination for Best Foreign Language Film. EMAfilms' latest production, *Mars & Avril*, by up-and-coming director Martin Villeneuve, was released in Quebec theatres in October 2012. Following its world premiere at the distinguished Karlovy Vary 2012, the film has been invited to screen at several esteemed festivals including Mumbai 2012 and Mill Valley 2012, and was recently honoured with 4 nominations for the Canadian Screen Awards 2013.

An aerial photograph capturing a winding road through a dense forest. The road curves from the bottom left towards the top right, with bright sunlight reflecting off its surface. The surrounding trees are a mix of dark silhouettes and golden highlights, suggesting the photo was taken during the "golden hour" at sunset. The overall composition is organic and dynamic.

Mars & Avril

BENOÎT BEAULIEU – CINEMATOGRAPHER AND PRODUCER

Benoît Beaulieu is a cinematographer who has worked on over two-dozen projects, ranging from short and feature length fiction films to documentaries and music videos. Benoit is also a producer, having completed more than 40 music videos and short films in this function, most notably for *Chromeo*, *Stars* and *Pat Metheny*. During his formative years he honed his skills in both lighting and as a Director of Photography, acquiring first-hand knowledge in all aspects of his craft. While the synergy between the Director and himself is paramount, Beaulieu brings his own vision to every project; a cinematic narration that complements the film. He is a firm believer that the subtle handling of colour, texture, contrast and frame has a powerful psychological impact on the spectator. With his most recent work on *Mars & Avril* by Martin Villeneuve and *Imaginaerium* by Stobe Harju, it is clear that Beaulieu is a cinematographer to watch out for.



Mars & Avril



FRANÇOIS SCHUITEN – PRODUCTION DESIGNER

François Schuiten published his first comic in 1973 (at the age of 16), consisting of 5 black and white pages in the French magazine *Pilote*. During his studies at the Saint-Luc Institute (1975–1977), he met Claude Renard, with whom he created two books: *Aux médianes de Cymbiola* and *Le Rail* (Les Humanoïdes Associés). Schuiten's brother Luc also worked with him several times for the series *Terres Creuses: Carapaces, Zara* and *Nogegon* (Les Humanoïdes Associés). His love of architecture became apparent in the series *Les Cités obscures*, an evocation of fantastic, partly imaginary cities that he created with his friend Benoît Peeters since 1982. Together they published: *Les Murailles de Samaris*, *La Fièvre d'Urbicande*, *L'Archiviste*, *La Tour*, *La Route d'Armilia*, *Brüsel*, *L'Écho des Cités*, *L'Enfant penchée*, *Le Guide des Cités*, *L'Ombre d'un homme*, *La Frontière invisible* and *La Théorie du grain de sable* (Casterman). Also, Schuiten designed numerous posters, illustrations and Belgian stamps, worked as a scenographer for metro stations and World's Fair pavilions, and as a production designer for a few movies: *Gwendoline* by Just Jaeckin, *Toto le Héros* by Jaco Van Dormael, *Taxandria* by Raoul Servais, *The Golden Compass* by Chris Weitz and, more recently, *Mr. Nobody* by Jaco Van Dormael and *Mars & Avril* by Martin Villeneuve.



Mars & Avril

CARLOS MONZON – VFX SUPERVISOR

Carlos Monzon is a VFX artist based in Montreal. Before joining the team of Vision Globale, he worked at numerous Montreal VFX companies on various TV and movie projects. In 2006 he left Montreal to work at Animal Logic in Sydney Australia, and in 2007 he joined the team of Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) in San Francisco as a Senior Compositor. In the past, Carlos has worked on numerous projects including *Avatar*, *Transformers*, *Transformers: Rise of the Fallen*, *Star Trek*, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Wall-E*, just to name a few. He is currently working as a VFX Supervisor/Lead Compositor at Vision Globale.



BENOÎT CHAREST – COMPOSER

At the age of 13, Benoît Charest became fascinated by the guitar, and learned by ear the songs of the Beatles and Led Zeppelin. Of course, he discovered jazz and decided at 17 to undertake private lessons with Neil Smolar, a graduate from the Berklee School of Music in Boston. This one taught him the bases of harmony, which helped him to acquire a greater mastery of the instrument and of music in general. During his college studies, Benoît earned a living playing with the best jazzmen in Montreal. In 1991, he signed his first score for *Montréal rétro*, a documentary of the National Film Board of Canada, for which he composed, arranged and conducted the musical framework. Since then, he has composed some fifteen soundtracks, among them that of *Les triplettes de Belleville*, which earned him a Cesar and an Oscar nomination for best music in 2004. Benoît has also composed music for television, theatre, and more than sixty commercials. He also composed the soundtrack of the controversial movie *Polytechnique* by Denis Villeneuve, and Juan Diego Solanas' *Upside Down*.



Mars & Avril

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Though it began as an ambitious adventure, which seemed impossible to carry out, I am proud to say today that my first feature film, *Mars & Avril*, is finally completed after seven years of sustained efforts. This science fiction film was not produced in the American way, Hollywood-style. Rather, it is a poetic tale that takes place in a futuristic, entirely imaginary Montreal. I was alone when I began working on the project but many well-known creative contributors, such as Robert Lepage, François Schuiten, Benoît Charest, soon joined me. Producers Benoît Beaulieu and Anne-Marie Gélinas came on board, giving their essential support to the process.

Mars & Avril was shot in 25 days, using the RED digital camera. Most of the film was shot on green screen, which allowed us to add visual effects and CGI sets afterwards. To translate the fantasy universe I had imagined to the screen, the creative team did extensive research and accomplished feats of ingenious prowess. For example, we were able to convince Guy Laliberté, founder of Cirque du Soleil, to finance the creation of the imaginary musical instruments to be used by the actors on set. Also, since Robert Lepage was unavailable for principal photography, an avant-garde 3D capturing technique was used to integrate him virtually into his scenes as a hologram! Six cameras were trained on Lepage's head while a mime portrayed the body. This type of process is but one example of the many steps that were required to shoot the film. In addition, it necessitated an entire year in the editing room, plus six months of post-production work to create the 550 VFX shots.

Ultimately, it turned out to be a major production shot with a modest budget and made possible by people's creativity and generosity.



Mars & Avril

INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN VILLENEUVE

Q– What inspired you to adapt your graphic novels into a feature film?

A– Actually, it was Robert Lepage who first thought of the idea of making a film based on the books. At the beginning, he was supposed to produce the film, but I ended up taking on the project myself. All the same, he remained significantly involved in the production, both as an artistic consultant and as a lead actor. He also contributed as an investor.

Q– How did you succeed in convincing your creative partners to get involved in this adventurous project?

A– The fact that there were so many talented and respected artists involved in the project from the beginning created a snowball effect. Throughout the process of writing and publishing the graphic novels, a number of creative collaborators had already become involved. Both the participation of the lead actors and François Schuiten were significant factors in encouraging other creative partners to join in the adventure. In the end, I didn't have to convince that many people. Seeing as this was the first Québécois film of its kind, many people wanted to participate based on the project's merits alone. I think people really took this film to heart and gave it their all.

Q– Who and what inspired your cinematic approach?

A– Directors like Stanley Kubrick or Terry Gilliam inspire me a lot, but I didn't try to copy my approach on that of any specific established filmmaker. Instead, I tried to find an approach that best suited the content of the film. As the story was of the fantasy genre, the key to making it work laid in preparation. We created a detailed 'animatic' of the entire film and mapped out every detail before shooting. My visual influences came primarily from comic books, especially that of François Schuiten, whom I approached as production designer. I wanted the source of my inspiration to play a direct role in the creation of the film rather than try to mimic his style.

Q– What was it like to work with François Schuiten?

A– First, I sent him my books and, soon after, he invited me to Brussels to further discuss the project. He generously agreed to work with me at each stage of the production. He was a key contributor to the overall aesthetic of the film and was also influential in our approach to shooting.

Mars & Avril

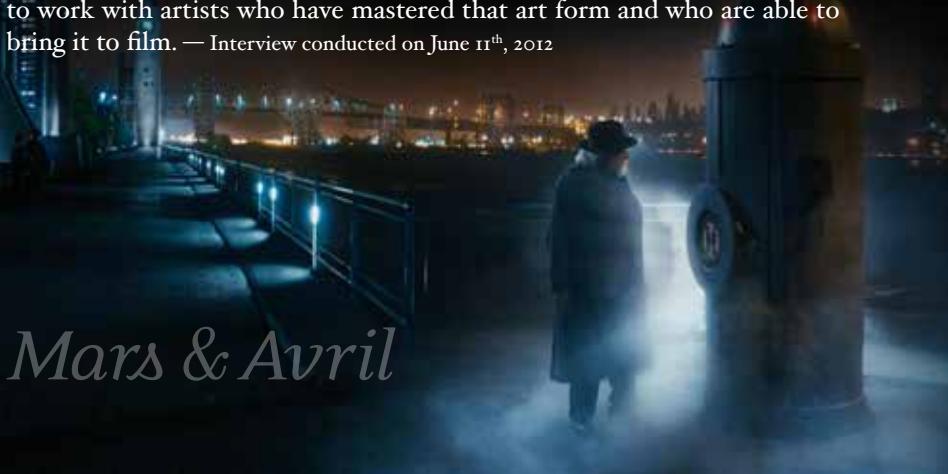
As a creator, Schuiten is very much in demand and he has worked on a number of impressive films, such as *Toto le héros*, *The Golden Compass* and *Mr. Nobody*. He was eager to contribute to our film. Working with him was a significant experience for me. He has been involved with the project since 2007 and has never faltered, even during the most difficult stages of the production. Actually, the people who were the most dedicated to the project happen to be those with the most prestigious careers.

Q– What are the main themes of the film and what message did you want to convey?

A– I was trying to marry the old and the new, as a metaphor for the unusual love story between an old musician and a young muse, but also because I was aiming for a “retro-futuristic” look. I think of the film as a cosmic fairy tale that brings together the themes of art, spirituality, the world of inventions, and love. I wanted to explore the relations between space, time, music and desire, as I believe these notions are tightly connected. The movie is essentially about the musician, the muse, the instrument maker and the cosmologist, each representing these notions in their own way. As the story progresses, dream takes over reality, and in the end I think that this is the actual message: dreams are the gateway to all that is possible.

Q– Do you have other projects in the works and, if so, will they be similar in genre?

A– Yes, I have other projects in mind. Among others, I’m in the midst of writing a film with François Schuiten, who had begun working on a story with a colleague, Benoît Sokal, another renowned comic book artist. These two artists are the heroes of my childhood, so to be able to work with them is extremely gratifying. It’s an ambitious project called Aquarica, which will be shot using CGI and 3D technology. I’m not limiting myself to one genre in particular, but I’m definitely drawn to science fiction because the genre is challenging and it offers an opportunity to invent something that has never been seen before. Also, the worlds of comic books are utopian, dream-like realms that are fertile grounds for creation. It’s very interesting to work with artists who have mastered that art form and who are able to bring it to film. — Interview conducted on June 11th, 2012



Mars & Avril





JACQUES
LANGUIRAND

CAROLINE
DHAVERNAS

PAUL
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ROBERT
LEPAGE

Mars & Avril

a film by
MARTIN VILLENEUVE

« MARS ET AVRIL » from volumes 1 and 2 of the eponymous graphic novels (Editions Sid Lee & la Pastèque) production designer FRANÇOIS SCHUITEN visual effects VISION GLOBALE visual effects supervisor CARLOS MONZON creative producer ROBERT LEPAGE casting LUCIE ROBTAILLE cinematography BENOÎT BEAULIEU costumes MARIANE CARTER art direction MARTIN TESSIER, PATRICK SIOUI & ELISABETH WILLIAMS editing MATHIEU DEMERS sound PASCAL BEAUDIN, OLIVIER CALVERT & LUC BOUDRIAS original music BENOÎT CHAREST executive producers LYnda BEAULIEU, PIERRE EVEN & MARIE-CLAUDE POULIN written and directed by MARTIN VILLENEUVE produced by ANNE-MARIE GÉLINAS, BENOÎT BEAULIEU & MARTIN VILLENEUVE

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MarsEtAvril

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