



Peccadillo Pictures presents
A film by Joachim Lafosse

OUR CHILDREN

(à perdre la raison)



OFFICIAL SELECTION
UN CERTAIN REGARD
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

WINNER: BEST ACTRESS

BASED ON TRUE EVENTS

NIELS ARESTRUP

EMILIE DEQUENNE

TAHAR RAHIM



"A masterclass in film-making"- Film of the Week

★★★★★

Trevor Johnston, Time Out

"A powerhouse emotional experience"

★★★★

Tim Robey - The Telegraph

UK DVD & BLU-RAY RELEASE: 28th October 2013

Belgium/France / Drama / 2012 / 111 Mins / Cert: 15 / Special Features: Interview with director, Avant les Mots (short film, 2010) and Private Madness (short film, 2004 exclusive to Blu-ray)

Press enquiries: Ollie Charles / ollie@peccapics.com

www.facebook.com/OurChildrenUK



SYNOPSIS:

Based on true events, celebrated director Joachim Lafosse's intense, multi-layered dissection of an unorthodox family unit created an unprecedented buzz at the **2012 Cannes Film Festival**, and won **Emilie Dequenne the prestigious Un Certain Regard Best Actress Award**. *OUR CHILDREN* was critically heralded as one of the **top art-house world cinema films of 2012** and **Belgium's official entry for the 2013 Academy Awards**.

Young, effervescent and full of life, Murielle (**Emilie Dequenne, *Rosetta***) has a promising future ahead of her when she meets and falls head over heels for Mounir (**Tahar Rahim, *A Prophet***). A wedding soon follows, and the happy couple quickly set about preparing to make a family. However, with family come ties, and none come as tight as that between Mounir and his adoptive father (**Niels Arestrup, *A Prophet, Sarah's Key***). As Murielle continues to bring new life into the family, in the form of four children, frictions between Mounir and Doctor Pinget reach boiling point. Helpless to extract her husband and children from the wealthy nest that Doctor Pinget has provided for them, Murielle is drawn into an unhealthy family dynamic. Within this oppressive environment, Murielle becomes trapped and all sense of reasoning begins to abandon her.

BEHIND THE LENS: INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR JOACHIM LAFOSSE



WHERE IS THIS STORY FROM?

I was freely inspired by an incident that occurred in Belgium in 2007. I was in my car when I heard a dramatic report on the radio about a woman who had killed her five children. I immediately felt that this harked back to Greek tragedy and that the incident offered me the possibility to go deeper into what I spoke about in my previous films: excessive love and its consequences, debt, perverse bonds, dysfunctional families, the question of limits... Some choices imposed themselves from the outset: neither illustrate nor document the incident, but take possession of it with my subjectivity, my point of view as an artist. Integrate the idea that in every family story, one person's truth is not the next person's. My task is not to seek out the judicial reality and respect it or to relate it with the objectiveness of a reporter. These tasks have already been carried out and they illustrate their own truths, among others. My task as a filmmaker is different. The goal is to offer an interior and interrogative view of what remains a human tragedy whatever the responsibilities. My role is to allow audiences to share the life of the characters that I have filmed and to allow them to perceive the drama from a fresh angle. I wanted to show that such an act, described as "monstrous", is no accident. People often call the crime of infanticide "unthinkable": my goal is to incite the audience to consider something that is too often described as inexplicable, to offer a different view, via fiction, and to arouse questions about the perception of reality, as much through my own gaze as through that of the audiences who view the film.

WHY ARE YOU SO FASCINATED BY THE DYSFUNCTIONAL BONDS OF THE FAMILY UNIT?

The family is where we learn about democracy and is also the best place to observe dictatorship in action. I know that it's a violent setting. What interests me in a family are the dysfunctions. All those things that we are unable to detect but that we take part in. The reasons why we are uneasy without knowing where the problem arises from. Why we are unable to break free of the bonds. Cinematically, a perverse bond is a fascinating subject because it is one that hides and is fuelled by complex characters.

THERE IS A COLONIALIST DIMENSION TO THE CHARACTER: A EUROPEAN WHO HAS ADOPTED A YOUNG NORTH AFRICAN...

Precisely. The problem with colonialism is that the colonizer doesn't make his history with the colonized official, he doesn't recognize it. It remains unofficial and secret for him. Doctor Pinget presents himself as Mounir's adoptive father but he isn't because he hasn't given him his name. That's why I would say instead that Mounir is Pinget's protégé, with all the ambiguity that entails. That is one of the things that fascinated me. You don't make a film with ideas but with characters. That's the lesson that the Dardenne brothers teach us. And here the characters are what I care about. How do you break free of someone who has given you everything, who has been your protector, your teacher, your educator? It can be a dangerous gift. We can imagine that André Pinget finds it hard expressing his love, that he is concealing a fragile side of his personality. That is what I told Niels Arestrup who plays him: "Your character is like a little boy who has to hand out sweets all the time to have friends in the schoolyard! And if he doesn't have any sweets, he thinks that no one will love him!". André can only imagine bonds from that angle. That is the tragedy of his life and it's a vicious circle.

ONE OF THE FILM'S STRENGTHS IS ITS SHADOWY AREAS. AMONG THE MANY QUESTIONS THAT WE ASK OURSELVES, THERE'S THAT OF THE BOND BETWEEN ANDRÉ AND MOUNIR WHICH IS TINGED WITH A CERTAIN AMBIGUITY...

I'm not interested in that question. What interests me are the issues of dependence and debt. But, yes, all female aspects are excluded. These two men leave no room for Murielle. They see her only as a wife and a mother. Indeed, who are the couples? That's partly the question that the film asks...



YOU RELATE AN EXCEPTIONAL STORY, THE DEVELOPMENT OF PAROXYSMAL SUFFERING FROM A SPECIFIC "CASE" BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, MURIELLE'S SUFFERING IS UNIVERSAL. ONE CAN MAKE A FEMINIST READING OF THE FILM: IT'S THE ALL TOO FREQUENT STORY OF HOUSEWIVES, WOMEN SUBJECTED TO CHILDBEARING, WOMEN DEPRIVED OF SPEECH, MUZZLED, MADE TO FEEL GUILTY AND BEATEN...

I saw my mother and stepmother go through multiple pregnancies; I grew up with women from whom I understood how difficult that had been. In Murielle's case, as in that of Medea, having children becomes a force of opposition. Thanks to her children, she profits from the doctor's generosity. And, feeling that she has given these children, she takes them back when she considers herself betrayed. That is how her character functions in the film. But that isn't necessarily a feminist approach: the film doesn't take away responsibility but it doesn't judge any of the characters either. It asks questions and seeks answers through the only medium that allows us to proceed in this way: a fictional account.

HOW CAN WE DEFINE MURIELLE?

While we thought of *Shadow of a Doubt* for André Pinget, our reference for Murielle was *A Woman Under the Influence* by John Cassavetes, with her way of pursuing her family life all the time. A woman out of her depth, exhausted, mistreated, preyed on by doubt and fear, and who breaks down. At the start, she is a young woman raised in self-abnegation. A lonely girl. Her parents aren't those she dreamt of and, with André, she meets the father that she would have loved to have. He is a man who protects her and makes her feel safe. Moreover, this is a situation that matches the times we live in. The doctor is a form of life-insurance. Today, everyone wants to live without danger. The couple thinks that André provides a guarantee of a risk-free existence. The tragedy builds up in an atmosphere of trust and ease. Breaking free of it means taking risks. Pleasure and desire die since there is no longer any risk. Death settles into this world of ease.

HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT WRITING THE SCREENPLAY?

A few basic rules were quickly established. For instance, I felt that there was no sense in filming the murders. I wanted to make a film that was purely the fruit of my subjectivity and my imagination. With Mathieu Reynaert and Thomas Bidegain, we decided to use all the journalistic elements available as the source of our inspiration: their words allowed us to seek out the universal beyond the individual in order to better imagine a myth detached from the facts that had brought about our need to make the film. The goal for us was not to write the truth, which we do not know (the press articles relate it in a purely fragmentary manner), or to offer a revision of the tragedy as it was experienced and judged in the real world. No one among us was in that house and knows what happened there and our goal wasn't to find out more or to offer a sort of re-enactment. We have created a fictional work without the pretension of explaining everything, but we wanted to make people think and discover the roots of a tragedy. The writing was also influenced by the film's aesthetic choices...

WHICH ARE?

Finding the right form to inspire emotion and thought at the same time without resorting to sensationalism. Two things were immediately obvious. We had to film in long takes, shot on a level with the characters and children. And what happened outside the frame. That's what the cinema is, in fact, an art of what happens off screen, an art of talking about things without showing them.



AS FOR "FRAMING" A FAMILY, THAT'S BECOME A HABIT FOR YOU!

You joke, but I've ended up by creating a bond between the framework of the family and the cinematic frame. I see each shot as a house and I wonder who lives there, who is going to be ejected from it, who is stifling within it... Furthermore, I decided to delegate this time. Before shooting, I made a short film in a crèche, as preparation for the film, and I discovered that when we didn't look after the children, they forgot us after three-quarters of an hour. And so I adopted the following strategy: only two people on the crew spoke to the children, the others, myself included, were just workers busying ourselves around them. My first assistant was the one who directed them. This referred me back to the subject of the film: on my own, I would never have been able to deal with them on top of all the rest. How is Murielle able to manage alone? There: you don't make a film on your own, just as you don't take care of children on your own!

WHY DID YOU PICK EMILIE DEQUENNE?

My subconscious again! I was just starting at Film School when I saw her tears on receiving her Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival for Rosetta. That film made a very strong impression on me. She is an incredible actress: she can feed a story and let it impregnate her. She astounded me during the shooting of the scene when she listens to a song by Julien Clerc in the car: we did six takes and she was amazing each time! My father was a photographer and, on seeing Emilie, for the first time I had the impression of offering myself what had been offered to my father: the right to be no more than a gaze.

AND THE MEN?

I wanted to work with well-known actors so as to be sure to ground myself in fiction. Tahar Rahim takes hold of a complex character who remains submissive but tries to assert himself. He had to show how his character is continually torn between his wife and his protector. Niels Arestrup hasn't played only likeable characters in the past and so brings with him a gravity that made it interesting to give him a pleasant and affectionate character, a sort of doting father.

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE MUSIC?

For the first time, I really wanted to use music in a film. It's an art that speaks directly to the audience's subconscious. The musical language is extremely useful in revealing the perversion that worms its way in and lurks behind the images and deeds. Filming a perverse bond means filming what hides. Music can help to show it without being explicit. I use music each time a transgression occurs. Scarlatti underlines this bond. Baroque music is perfect because it carries us beyond psychology.

AND THE TITLE?

I don't think any other title would work! Murielle cannot carry out her act without toppling over the edge.

MUSIC

The music in OUR CHILDREN features tracks from Julien Clerc (Femmes Je Vous Aime) and Daniel Lavoie's "Ils s'aiment" as well as Joseph Hayden's 'Stabat Mater' meaning 'Sorrowful Mary'. The song is intrinsically linked to the themes of the film, creating depth to the film's ultimate message and tragic ending. The music in OUR CHILDREN is composed by Alessandro Scarlatti and Aria Della Speranza. .

JOACHIM LAFOSSE – BIOGRAPHY



Joachim Lafosse was born on 1975 in Brussels. Graduate of the IAD, his senior film project, **Tribu (Tribe)**, met a great success in many festivals. Scriptwriter, director, author and theatre director, he went from project to project with frenzied rhythm. His first feature movie, **PRIVATE MADNESS (2004)**, was noted for its bitterness, and won many awards. 2006 was the year when this young 30-year-old movie maker bloomed. **CAREND HEUREUX (WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY)**, his second feature movie was screened in competition at Locarno Festival and at Premiers Plans d'Angers Festival where he won the **Grand Prix**. Same year, he experienced the honors of the

competition in Venice Festival with **NUE PROPRIÉTÉ (PRIVATE PROPERTY)**. In 2008, his fourth feature movie, **ELÈVE LIBRE (PRIVATE LESSONS)**, was selected at the 40th Quinzaine des Réaliateurs of Festival de Cannes. The film met a great critical success. His fifth feature movie, **A Perdre la raison (Our Children)**, in official selection of 2012 Festival de Cannes in Un Certain Regard section, received a warm welcome from both public and press and also received the Best Actress Award for Emilie Dequenne.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Emilie Dequenne – Murielle



Emilie Dequenne won the **Best Actress award at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival for her debut film performance in the Palme d'Or-winning film ROSETTA**. Dequenne became more well-known with worldwide audiences following her role in **BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF**, a \$29 million-budgeted film that grossed more than \$70 million in cinemas worldwide. In 2009 she played the lead in André Téchiné's **LA FILLE DU RER** alongside Catherine Deneuve. She starred in the French thriller film **THE PACK**, which premiered at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival.

In 2012, she won the Un Certain Regard Award for Best Actress award at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival for her role in the film **OUR CHILDREN**.

Tahar Rahim – Mounir



Tahar Rahim was born and raised in Belfort, France. He studied cinema and completed a three-year degree at the University of Montpellier. In 2005, he starred in a low-budget fictionalized documentary, **TAHAR L'ETUDIANT [Tahar the Student]**, directed by Cyril Mennegun. He then moved to Paris to pursue his acting career, beginning with stage work. Tahar Rahim's first feature film was **À L'INTÉRIEUR [Inside]**, directed by Alexandre Bustillo and Julien Maury. He then starred in the French miniseries **LA COMMUNE**, directed by Philippe Triboit and written by Abdel Raouf Dafri. His performance in the lead role of Jacques Audiard's **UN PROPHETE [A Prophet]**, brought him international attention when the film world-premiered at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival. The movie received

acclaim and honours worldwide, including the Cannes Film Festival Grand Prix award, Academy Award and Golden Globe Award nominations for Best Foreign-Language Film. Tahar Rahim earned two César Awards (France's Oscar equivalent) for Best Actor and Most Promising Actor. He also won the European Film Award for Best Actor. In 2009, Tahar Rahim shot **THE EAGLE** by Kevin Macdonald, a peplum on a disappeared legion. He then played Matthieu, a workman starting a devastating passion with a Chinese student in Paris, under the direction of Chinese director Lou Ye, for his new film, **LOVE & BRUISES**. In summer 2010, he shot WWII drama, **LES HOMMES LIBRES** (*Free Men*) by Ismael Ferroukhi, in the lead role of a young Algerian immigrant worker in Paris whose unexpected friendship with a Jewish singer inspires him to join the French Resistance. Tahar Rahim also stars in **BLACK GOLD** by Jean-Jacques Annaud, alongside Antonio Banderas and Freida Pinto, and of course, **A PERDRE LA RAISON** (*Our Children*) by Belgian director Joachim Lafosse, co-starring Niels Arestrup and Emilie Dequenne (Cannes Film Festival 2012, Official Selection Un Certain Regard).

NIELS ARESTRUP – Dr. Pinget



Niels Arestrup is an internationally known revered French actor. He has won two César Awards for Best Supporting Actor for *De battre mon cœur s'est arrêté* and *A Prophet*, where he was directed by renown French director, Jacques Audiard.

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TITLE	OUR CHILDREN
STARRING	EMILIE DEQUENNE, TAHAR RAHIM, NIELS ARESTRUP
CO – STARRING	BAYA BELAL, STEPHANE BISSOT, MOUNIA RAOUI
DIRECTED BY	JOACHIM LAFOSSE
PRODUCERS	JACQUES-HENRI & OLIVIER BRONCKART, JANI THILTGES, SYLVIE PIALAT, THEIRRY SPICHER
PRODUCTION COMPANY	VERSUS PRODUCTION, SAMSA FILMS, LES FILMS DU WORSO, BOX PRODUCTIONS PRIME TIME, RTBF, RTS
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	JEAN-FRANCOIS HENSGENS
EDITOR	SOPHIE VERCRUYSSSE
COMPOSER	HENRI MAIKOFF, INGRID SIMON, THOMAS GAUDER
LENGTH	105 MINS
LANGUAGE	FRENCH



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About Peccadillo Pictures:

Peccadillo Pictures is one of the UK's most recognised film distributors of Art House, Gay & Lesbian and World Cinema titles with an impressive collection of films from across the world. Launched in 2000, Peccadillo nurtures new and upcoming talent alongside established directors. In addition, Peccadillo Pictures also distributes short films and re-releases of classic titles.

As well as bringing an array of films to cinemas across the UK and Ireland, Peccadillo provides film viewing on a variety of platforms, from online, video on demand, iTunes, Blu-ray and DVD.