FROM THE DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT:

One reason why so many people, myself included, love radio - but I didn’t realize this until long after I started to love it - has to do with the lack of images, the invisible nature of those who talk on it, just as the innumerable places it takes us to remain invisible. An invisibility that allows us to imaginarily identify with those who speak and which, without our having to leave home, allows us to travel on land, sea, in every strata of society, in every sphere of thought and human activity. But the radio is also our collective memory. Voices that we are familiar with, jingles, songs we know by heart, totally carefree moments, "slots" that shape our daily lives and ritualize them. And sometimes, it’s just a backdrop that we do not listen to, a friendly, reassuring presence while we are doing something else.

© Nicolas Philibert, June 2010

SYNOPSIS

A journey into the heart of Radio France to discover what usually escapes our gaze: the mysteries and the wings of a media whose very matter, sound, remains invisible.

CREW

Photography: KateLL DJIAN • Camera: NICOLAS PHILIBERT, KATELL DJIAN • Sound: JULIEN CLOQUET • Editing: NICOLAS PHILIBERT • Mix: OLIVIER DÔ HÙU • Executive producer: SERGE SALÉ • Line producer: VERONIQUE GUÉRARD • Reproduction: LES FILMS D’ICI, LONGRIDE INC., ARTE FRANCE CINÉMA • With the participation of ARTE FRANCE, CANAL +, ONE + in association with COPROVIES et LES ÉDITIONS MONTPARNASSE • With the support of CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE L’IMAGE ANIMÉE, and LA RÉGION ILE-DE-FRANCE • French distribution and international sales: LES FILMS DU LOSANGE • © LES FILMS D’ICI, ARTE FRANCE CINÉMA, LONGRIDE INC – 2012.

FILMOGRAPHY

NICOLAS PHILIBERT


INTERNATIONAL SALES

LES FILMS DU LOSANGE

• MUSIC: JOSÉ CÁRCELES (in Spain & Japan)
  accepa@filmsulosange.fr / +33 6 88 85 80 55
• LES FILMS DU LOSANGE (UK & Asia)
  la.poly@filmsulosange.fr / +33 6 75 13 85 75
• MARINE GOULOIS (Festivals Management)
  m.goulois@filmsulosange.fr / +33 6 84 21 74 53

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INTERVIEW WITH NICOLAS PHILIBERT

/ How did you get the idea for this film?

It was something that I had in mind for a long while. The idea of filming voices. A film about radio is a little unusual — how can you film radio without shattering its mystery? — but that is probably the reason why I wanted to make it.

/ At the start of shooting, did you know exactly what you wanted to film?

No, absolutely not. I don’t make my films with a pre-existing desire to get a message across. When shooting begins, I usually think that the less I know, the better. I like to improvise.

/ How long did you stay on site and how many of

them did you stay on for?

I would say two or three weeks, perhaps a month. It is one of the rare cases where one could plan in advance precisely what one wanted to do. But it was too great a challenge, it would have been too risky. It was a sort of scaffolding, but there was no question of following it to the letter. After a while, I think it no longer bothers us. However, since the film has a very high density of sound, voices and listening, you could say that sound, voices and listening are the very subject matter of the film. However, the soundtrack is fairly simple, almost uncluttered and certain without flourish. I devoted a great deal of attention to it, especially during editing: the links, associations and passages from one sequence to another are often based on the sounds and over a great deal to them. But that is not unique to this film. In my own way, I’m a filmmaker of language. From Godard’s Silence, which exposed leading voices, to Nairatta, whose soundtrack is entirely off screen, via The Land of the Dead, Every Little Thing, or even Paris, January 2013, you can see most of my films as variations on speech and language. It is therefore not surprising that the question of sound occupies a decisive position since it structures the subject.

/ What difficulties did you encounter during filming?

This is a film that required a great deal of flexibility and responsiveness from everyone involved — an enormous amount of programming produced and broadcast each day on the different stations of Radio France, we had to be on the constant alert. In some cases, I was able to get the theme of a programme and the names of the guests in advance, then I could anticipate and organize things ahead of shooting. So how did I proceed? It’s hard to say because I had to take numerous factors into account: the very nature of the programming, their dramaturgy, the context on a specific day. And I soon realized that a quality programme did not necessarily provide a good sequence! It was a question of filming voices. A film about radio is necessarily bound up with the variety of stations offers an incredible range of cards and bring out new paths to follow.

/ Radio France produces and broadcasts a huge

number of programmes each week. According to what criteria did you choose to film one programme rather than another?

Every one of us has “their” own radio, their favourite shows, their pet hosts, their daily or weekly appoint- ments with the annalist. That also holds true for me but it was the pre-determined set of the film’s backbones, I wanted diversity and heterogeneity, as I said, but it couldn’t become excessively varied or turn into a filmed kaleidoscope without a guide or a thread to hold it together. It’s hard to say because I had to take numerous factors into account: the very nature of the programmes, their dramaturgy, the context on a specific day. And I soon realized that a quality programme did not necessarily provide a good sequence! It was a question of filming voices. A film about radio is necessarily bound up with the variety of stations offers an incredible range of cards and bring out new paths to follow.

/ What are characters and situations yet

we move from one world to another with a great deal of fluidity. How did you approach editing?

In terms of construction, I opted for the simplest solution the film unfolds over one day and one night. But it is a fairly virtuous day that combines sequences shot in winter, in spring, or in summer with the Tour Eiffel. In the middle of the day, there’s even a brief sequence at night when the Eiffel Tower lights up with a great deal to them. But that is not unique to this film. In my own way, I’m a filmmaker of language. From Godard’s Silence, which exposed leading voices, to Nairatta, whose soundtrack is entirely off screen, via The Land of the Dead, Every Little Thing, or even Paris, January 2013, you can see most of my films as variations on speech and language. It is therefore not surprising that the question of sound occupies a decisive position since it structures the subject.

/ Did the nature of this project lead you to work

on the soundtrack in a specific way?

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