

Pitch

Georges's life is turned upside-down when he meets Yamina and decides to help her. While she seems to be persecuted and living in hiding, Georges's reality is rooted in a daily routine without any surprises. Yamina's stories fascinate him: her happy childhood under the rhythm of a song, the massacres in the 1990s in the Great South, as well as her difficulties in Algeria and then in France.

Georges spends more and more time with Yamina and is totally disorientated the day she disappears without a word. As his search for her unfolds, Georges realizes that he knows nothing about her and that every person he meets who knew Yamina seems to have a different version of the young woman's life.

Convinced that he must go to Algiers to save her, Georges abandons everything and sets out on a journey without any concrete destination. His quest finally leads him to an oasis in the Sahara, a desert that spreads as widely as this love story between Bonnevoie and Tabelbala.

Synopsis

Day after day, week after week, Georges spends most of his time travelling from one railway platform to the next, but without ever leaving the borders of Luxembourg. He's a ticket inspector working for the Luxembourg Railways Company and his life is rooted in a daily routine without any surprises.

At 28 Georges still lives in his parental home in Bonnevoie. Outside his working hours, he shares his free time between his fiancée Nicole, his father who's confined to a wheelchair, the local brass band where he plays the baritone and an amateur football team.

One day, as Georges is doing his round in the train, Yamina, a young Algerian woman, tries to hide in the lavatory. Severely beaten up, her face is covered in blood. Georges offers his help, not knowing that this encounter is about to change his life forever.

Yamina, 22 years old, studies medicine and takes courses at the university of Nancy... at least, that's what she tells Georges. She also talks to him about her family's difficulties in Algeria and the massacres in the Great South in the 1990s. Now, she's being followed, persecuted even.

Georges offers to accommodate her in a shed he owns in a communal garden near the city centre. Not knowing where else to go, Yamina accepts reluctantly. As the weeks go by, Georges's compassion mutates into friendship, fascination... maybe even love. Unbeknownst to Nicole and to his father, Georges spends more and more time with Yamina, listening to stories about her happy childhood under the rhythm of a song and the difficult moments she faced in Algeria and then in France.

When Yamina disappears without a word, Georges finds himself utterly

disorientated. While trying to discover what happened to her, Georges meets people who knew Yamina. He realizes that he knows almost nothing about her and that everyone seems to have a different version about the young woman's life.

Convinced that he must go to Algiers to save her, Georges abandons his quiet little life and sets out on a journey without any concrete destination. Despite language barriers, the African heat and the lack of any promising leads, Georges does not abandon his search. At the gateway to the Sahara, he recognizes the melody Yamina once sang to him which revives his obsession to find her. His quest finally leads him to an oasis in a desert that spreads as widely as this love story between Bonnevoie and Tabelbala.

contrastes.

A melodrama made in Luxembourg

A matter of genre

Arabian Nights could be described as a love story, a fairytale or a mixture between an adventure film and a road movie. Paul Kieffer's latest movie certainly contains elements of these different film genres but *Arabian Nights* is above all a melodrama.

The director respected the conventions of the genre: an encounter, a separation and a moving reunion before a final separation. But he also managed to adapt the codes of the genre to a very Luxembourgish reality, thus turning this film into the first melodrama in Luxembourgish language in the Grand-Duchy's film history.

The everyday world of Georges, a young Luxembourger leading a life under the rhythm of his daily routine, is turned upside-down by Yamina, a young mysterious woman who needs help. Georges's initial compassion for this young Algerian gradually evolves towards fascination - maybe even love - before becoming a somewhat naïve obsession when Yamina goes missing overnight.

Georges is simply a nice and ordinary guy who thinks that Yamina must be saved. When he sets on a journey, a quest that is maybe over his head, Georges becomes an accidental hero.

A story of willpower

Between the construction of a shed on the slopes running alongside the riverbanks of the Alzette and the challenge to put back on its rails a train that hadn't run for years between Oran and Bechar... a great number of efforts were needed to make this film.

But all these efforts started with the director's wish to make genre films with a Luxembourgish twist. After winning a synopsis competition, Paul Kieffer got down to writing the script, the first draft of which was signed Philippe Blasband. At that time, the director didn't yet know that the ending of his love story would actually be shot in Tabelbala, an oasis he found quite by chance on a map of the world.

After filming in Luxembourg for several weeks, the film's crew went to Algeria to continue the shooting throughout the cities of Algiers, Oran and Tabelbala. The Tabelbala region, where the last part of the film

takes place, is situated about 450 kilometres south of Bechar. The beauty of this oasis lost in the desert enriches the movie with a multitude of contrasts.

Both the Luxembourgish and the Algerian crew did everything possible to tell Georges's story - his quiet, unexciting little life, his family, his love life, his hopes, his hobbies, his everyday world resembles that of many others like him.

A promise of escape

The title *Arabian Nights* reminisces about the tales in *One Thousand and One Nights* and, as confesses the director, the title of his latest film is deliberately cliché. However behind this promise of escape in a world inhabited by Ali Baba and other Sinbads, hides a good amount of realism and irony.

The story of this ordinary young man who takes extraordinary decisions is anchored in a very realistic Luxembourgish context. The first part of the movie shows a rainy and cold Luxembourg in which Georges embodies the lower middle class, a social strata that was once populated by the working class. Everything in Georges's life seems to be programmed in advance - everything except his encounter with Yamina who awakens his attraction for exoticism. From a motionless traveller, he mutates into an adventurer who dares to take risks.

Between Bonnevoie and Tabelbala, *Arabian Nights* shows the itinerary of two oases: a very real one, a small country that has almost been spared by the most violent of storms of a globalized world; and a fantasized one in the Sahara desert, where one has to leave the real world to find the magic of the one thousand and one nights.

Paul Kieffer - Interview

How would you describe your film in a few words?

Arabian Nights is a classic love story: boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy finds girl. The idea was to tell the story of an encounter, a separation and as it's a melodrama - meaning a story that doesn't end well - a last encounter just before the ending, before the final separation.

Why have you chosen to do a melodrama?

I've always wanted to make genre films, be it detective films, romantic comedies, horror movies or, like in this case, melodramas, while adapting their stories to a typically Luxembourgish situation. To make genre films amounts to respecting stereotypes, clichés and conventions that are always the same. That was the starting point to write the story of this film.

Why start this series of different genre films with a melodrama?

To be honest, *Arabian Nights* is the third film of the series. The first two, a detective film and a *film noir*, never made it past the writing stage. The next one should be a fantasy film but I don't know if this

project will succeed. I'm working on it - we'll see. In any case, the melodrama was the third in the series. I would also like to do a comedy but it's a very difficult genre. It's much easier to make an audience cry than to make it laugh.

Your other films are adaptations while *Arabian Nights* is based on an original script. Was it easier or more difficult for you?

Much more difficult! *Die Reise das Land* was partly based on a theatre play. The original text was shortened on the one hand, and enriched by a parallel story on the other hand. It was quite experimental.

Schacko Klak, my second film, is the adaptation of a 500-page novel. For financial reasons, we only focussed on the central part of the novel. The film only represents about 20 pages of the book.

For *Arabian Nights* however, I started from scratch. I invented the whole story, my only constraint being the clichés applicable to the traditional structure of a melodrama: an encounter, a separation, a search for the lover who's gone missing and the dramatic reunion at the end.

Did you have any difficulties in applying the codes of melodrama to a realistic Luxembourgish context?

Quite the opposite actually! These constraints made my work much easier as I thus had guiding principles from the start. According to a study, film and literature can be reduced to 7 types of stories. Any kind of film belongs to one of these 7 categories. That's all Hollywood does - I'm not talking about independent or experimental films. As far as traditional narrative film is concerned, after about 20 minutes you already know what the ending will be like. These are only variations on the same theme. We already know the ending, but what we're actually interested in are the dances between the beginning and the ending. It's the same with opera: "it ain't over until the fat lady sings". 19th century opera always ends with the heroine dying, she's the one who sings last. What's interesting about it is how she got to that point.

The constraints of the genre are like a skeleton. I even gave myself constraints when directing the film. *Arabian Nights* always adopts the protagonist's point of view. The audience only sees what Georges sees. However, I broke that constant three times: once with Yamina, once with Nicole and once with Georges's father. These exceptions show things Georges couldn't possibly see, like for instance when Yamina is alone in the office or, at the very end, when Nicole walks in front of the travel agency's shop window.

For the rest of the film, the audience is always with Georges. In Algeria, for example, he doesn't understand what the shepherd tells him in Arabic and those in the audience who don't speak that language won't understand anything either.

How did the collaboration go with Philippe Blasband who wrote the first version of the script?

As I hadn't done a fiction in 15 years and as my first two films were adaptations co-directed with another filmmaker, I was almost a beginner at almost 50. I was out of the circuit for quite some time and I needed

to become credible again, as a scriptwriter and as a director. I thus took part in a synopsis competition. After winning this competition, the wheels of the system started turning. At the time, I had another commitment and didn't have the time to write the script. So it was Philippe, whom I already knew, who transformed my synopsis into a script.

Philippe is a professional scriptwriter who also directs films; however, I see myself as a director - I write out of necessity. Philippe's version was very faithful to the synopsis, but once this first version was written, it became clear that a Luxembourger had to rewrite it. Philippe read the versions that followed. The content and the storyline remained the same, though I changed the main characters, made them younger and we finally shot the eighth version of the script. At the very end, someone helped me to adapt the dialogues, especially Yamina's. It's a laborious process and I need a lot of time to write.

How did the casting go?

Luckily, it was very easy. I hate castings and I hate looking for actors I don't know. It's distressing, not only for them but also for me. With Jules and Sabrina, it was very different.

I can't really remember which version of the script I was writing when I watched *L'Esquive*. After 30 seconds I knew Sabrina Ouzani was my Yamina.

When Claude Waringo, the producer, was dealing with the financing of the film, we didn't yet know whether we needed Belgian or French "assets" for co-production reasons. I was really fixated on Sabrina. Claude contacted her agent, we met and it "clicked" between us.

One could say I was lucky because she not only perfectly fits the character, but meanwhile she was old enough to play it. Sabrina is an absolutely marvellous young woman. Working with her was very easy and the relationship between us was very jovial, which is quite nice on a movie set.

And Jules Werner?

I have known Jules for ages. He made his debut in a play I staged at the Théâtre du Centaure. We then made two other plays together before he went to England to study his profession. When he decided to return to Luxembourg, I immediately offered him to play Georges in my film.

Georges is actually quite boring. He's the kind of character films are not really interested in, except if he's a bit nuts like in Aki Kaurismaki's movies: the working-class, silent, alcoholic guy who has a comical touch.

To me, Jules embodies the typical Luxembourger. He's very normal while having an enormous charm. It's very difficult to find a professional actor in his age range in Luxembourg. Jules's acting, personality and physique have given Georges a life of his own. If he hadn't done the movie, I really don't know who else could have played the part. Moreover, he speaks Luxembourgish. This criterion made the casting of this role all the more difficult.

Why was it a necessity for you to shoot the film in Luxembourgish?

This story could have taken place in Liège or in Helsinki for instance, but let's leave Liège to the Dardenne brothers and Helsinki to Kaurismäki. They know these cities far better than I ever will. I wrote about what I knew best: the people here, my country, my mother tongue... At the beginning the idea was to make a film in Luxembourgish. 70% of the dialogues are in French, but as far as I am concerned, it was essential that the Luxembourgish characters speak their own language and that the film be shot in the Grand-Duchy.

I don't think the story would have worked if I had placed it in France for example. The community from the Maghreb is too big in Paris or in the provinces. The exotic side of Yamina's character, Georges's fascination for her and his desire to escape wouldn't have been so credible and wouldn't have had the same impact if the story didn't take place in Luxembourg.

Did you have any difficulties to shoot in Algeria?

There haven't been many film productions in Algeria these past 15 years. For a long time it was impossible for Europeans to shoot in this country. As Yamina talks about her family's difficulties, the massacres, the persecutions, the character simply had to be Algerian.

Shooting in Algeria really was a challenge and until the very last moment, we weren't sure whether we'd be able to shoot there or not. We could have shot the film in Morocco or in Tunisia, two countries with a well-established film industry. When I wrote the synopsis, I found Tabelbala with a finger on a map.

We did some location scouting in Tunisia but, meanwhile, the situation in Algeria had improved. Just to put my mind at rest, I went there with a guide, the idea was to take pictures of Tabelbala in order to find a similar place in Tunisia.

In Algiers and in Bechar, we were welcomed with a lot of friendliness. We were even the first Europeans in 15 years to go to Tabelbala, this lost oasis in the desert. The people there gave us a warm welcome and the place was exactly like the one I had described in the script, although I had never been there before. It would have been treason to shoot in Tunisia.

The shooting conditions were certainly a little bit more difficult in Algeria than they are here, but everyone showed a great willingness to work in film again after such a long time and the people there were very motivated.

The Algerian crew even managed to put a train back on the rails although it hadn't run for over 10 years between Oran and Bechar. The train derailed several times before shooting and I was a bit worried because we only had one day to shoot the scene. The story of the train through the desert was however very important from a dramatic point of view, a bit like in *Doctor Zhivago* where the lovers' paths briefly cross unbeknownst to them. It took many efforts to shoot that scene and the Algerian crew showed a surprising will to make it happen. Eventually, everything went according to plan.

The film develops a multitude of contrasts. Was it a deliberate choice?

Yes, the film plays on these contrasts: Luxembourg vs. Algeria, North vs. South, the city vs. the desert, routine vs. freedom, heat vs. cold... Even the female characters oppose each other: one brunette and one blonde, except that here the blonde is not the temptress. Usually, melodramas end when the lovers meet again to say goodbye or to die or to part forever.

It was imperative that Georges couldn't find Yamina in Luxembourg. He had to experience this exoticism, he had to break his daily grind. We had to show a rupture, a fracture, a departure. The ending is the total opposite of the Luxembourgish situation at the beginning of the story. Even the colours are different: we went from a grey-green to a yellow-ochre. All these contrasts are the "rewarding" side of Georges's character.

Georges somehow represents the contemporary Luxembourgish proletariat...

The character could have been a teacher or a banker, but I wanted him to embody what has become the Luxembourgish proletariat. Georges would have probably worked in the mines or in a factory if the story was set in the 1960s or 1970s. For a Luxembourger, to be a ticket inspector for the national Railways Company corresponds to the lowest step on the social ladder.

However, I didn't want Georges to be some kind of loser like one sometimes sees in Luxembourgish films. He's pretty normal, has a fiancée, a job that may even make him happy. In short, he's a young man whose life is planned out... until Yamina shows up...

What happens in Georges's head when he chucks it all in from one day to the next?

No, not from one day to the next! During the two first thirds of the film, he fights against his attraction for Yamina. His state of mind somewhat corresponds to the title of a song by Tom Waits: "I Hope That I Don't Fall in Love With You". His relationship with Yamina evolves as times goes by. She's like a mirage in his life. He doesn't really fall in love with her, but rather with the image he has of this exotic young woman. But when she kisses him, he runs away. When he sees her naked in the shower, he runs away. When he lies to Nicole, he runs away from the truth. Inside, he fights against his feelings. The situation makes him unhappy but when Yamina disappears, he doesn't hesitate any longer. It's another convention of melodrama: once the object of desire is out of reach, it becomes imperative to get it back.

The title of the film implies some kind of fairytale...

I wanted the title of the film to be very kitsch and *Arabian Nights* is indeed the height of kitsch. However, the challenge was to show during the first hour a relatively naturalistic reality, brothers Dardenne style. The scene with the shoe in the mud reminds us of *Cinderella*, but it's the only element that refers to a fairytale.

At the end, Georges thinks of Yamina as of a persecuted princess of the desert and to get her back, he becomes the opposite of what he once was. Georges detaches himself more and more from his reality, his roots. The last half hour is like a waking dream.

As soon as we're in Algeria, the film becomes a kind of road movie. There is probably some truth to what Yamina told him, but Georges discovers that she hasn't told him the whole truth. As things unfold, he realizes that she's a mirage.

Yamina's character reminds us of Scheherazade...

Yes, like in *One Thousand and One Nights*, Yamina tells stories to survive. I have discussed the character a lot with Sabrina. Yamina has two stories: one in France and another in Algeria. While she thinks of herself as being French, the French see her as someone from the Maghreb. In reality, her life is much less dramatic than she lets on. But her stories help her to survive. She lies to Georges to make herself more interesting, so he doesn't reject her and so he continues to help her out. She takes him to a fictional landscape, an idealized Tabelbala where happiness is within reach.

The film asks more questions than it gives answers. Does the film end with an imaginary happy ending?

When Georges hears the song about the Cheraïa well, he takes a last decision and walks into the desert all by himself. He walks for a whole day before falling down with exhaustion. He dozes off and his last vision is a dream in which his journey continues beyond reality.

Once again, it's a convention of the melodramatic genre: lovers meet one last time, be it in the hereafter or when one of them is about to die. After plenty of difficulties, the lovers meet again although one of them has a few minutes left to live. Maybe Georges is happy when he dies because he meets up with Yamina in his final vision.

Our friends in Tabelbala were a bit frustrated because they wanted to know what happened after Georges found Yamina. Were they going to get married? As Yamina is a Muslim and Georges is a Christian, will he convert to Islam? My film ends way before all that. It's a melodrama after all. If I had shown what follows - the wedding, the birth of their children, the fights because she's sick of taking care of their 5 kids, etc. - we would be in Ingmar Bergman's *Scenes From A Marriage*. That's another film, not mine. My film ends when they meet again.

The audience knows that the ending is a vision because the oasis is the same we see in the travel agency. Georges thus becomes one of the characters of that poster. But the audience is free to imagine its own ending of the story.

Short biographies

Paul Kieffer - Director / Scriptwriter

Born in Dudelange in 1957, Paul Kieffer started his career as a journalist after studying at C.U.E.J. in Strasbourg. First he worked for RTL Luxembourg before becoming an independent journalist. In 1986, Paul Kieffer founded Samsa Film together with Jani and Paul Thiltges, Christian Kmiotek, Frank Feitler and Claude Waringo. In 1993, he is the director of Luxembourg's Socio-Cultural Radio station for a year. Meanwhile, he discovers his passion for theatre and invests time and energy in staging several productions. So far, he staged over fifteen plays for various national theatres in Luxembourg. Feeling more than comfortable in directing actors, he turns to film directing and his first feature film, *Die Reise das Land*, co-directed with Frank Hoffmann, is released in 1987. Three years later, he joins forces yet again with Frank Hoffmann and together they direct *Schacko Klak*, now a classic of Luxembourgish cinema. He also explores other audiovisual formats and directs several documentaries, short films and videos, like for example *De Präis vun der Fräiheet* (1987), *Portraits d'artistes* (1996 and 1997), *Ma vie au Congo* (2001) and *D'Lëtzebuerger am Tour de France* (2002).

Claude Waringo - Producer

Born in 1963, Claude Waringo studies to be a director and producer at INSAS in Brussels. In 1986, he founds Samsa Film together with Jani and Paul Thiltges, Christian Kmiotek, Frank Feitler and Paul Kieffer. He is one of the founding members of ULPA, Luxembourg's association of audiovisual producers. He is also a jury member at the European Film Academy and a member of the Consultative Commission of the Ministry of Culture. Since 1989, Claude Waringo produced and co-produced over 70 films (including features, short films and documentaries). His filmography covers amongst others: *La promesse* by the Dardenne brothers, *L'école de la chair* by Benoît Jacquot, *Une liaison pornographique* by Frédéric Fonteyne, *J'ai toujours voulu être une sainte* by Geneviève Mersch, *Un honnête commerçant* by Philippe Blasband, *La femme de Gilles* by Frédéric Fonteyne and, more recently, *Comme t'y es belle* by Lisa Azuelos and *J'aurais voulu être un danseur* by Alain Berliner. Claude Waringo also directed a documentary in 1995, *Edward J. Steichen*.

Sabrina Ouazani - "Yamina"

Born in 1988, Sabrina Ouazani starts her career in 2002 playing Frida in *L'Esquive* by Abdelatif Kechiche, a success at the French box-office that went on to win the César for Best Picture. She got a Best Female Newcomer nomination for the same film. She played in *Trois petites filles* by Jean-Loup Hubert and *Fauteuils d'orchestre* by Danièle Thompson. Apart from *Arabian Nights*, Sabrina Ouazani's upcoming theatrical releases include *Paris*, Cédric Klapisch's latest directorial effort, *La graine et le mulet* by Abdelatif Kechiche and *J'attends quelqu'un* by Jérôme Bonnell.

Jules Werner - "Georges"

Born in 1977, Jules Werner starts studying acting at the age of 21 at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He's regularly cast in plays staged in theatres in Luxembourg and makes a name for himself playing, amongst others, Shakespeare, Choderlos de Laclos, Coline

Serreau and Harold Pinter. The character of Georges in *Arabian Nights* is his first major role in a feature film. In 2007, he is Luxembourg's "Shooting Star" at the Berlin Film Festival, a European initiative to promote young promising actors.

Philippe Blasband - Co-writer

Born in Teheran in 1964, Philippe Blasband graduated in editing at INSAS. He was Gaston Compère's pupil at the *Athénée Royal d'Ixelles*. He starts his career editing shorts on film and on video. He writes (and co-writes) scripts of shorts and feature films such as *Bob le déplorable* (short), two sketches for *Les sept péchés capitaux* (collective), *John* (short), *Max et Bobo* by Frédéric Fonteyne (feature), *Une liaison pornographique* by Frédéric Fonteyne (feature), *Thomas est amoureux* by Pierre-Paul Renders (feature), *J'ai toujours voulu être une sainte* by Geneviève Mersch (feature) and *Irina P.* by Sam Garbarski (feature). Versatile and wordy, Philippe Blasband explores various styles and formats of artistic expression as a dramatist, writer, scriptwriter, theatre and film director. His biography thus includes four novels, a collection of short stories, writing and staging of several plays, as well as the direction of three short films and two features including *Un honnête commerçant*, a Samsa Film production selected at the Venice Film Festival in 2002. Website: www.blasband.be

Jean-Louis Sonzogni - Director of photography

A graduate of the film department from the *Institut Supérieur des Arts du Spectacle et Techniques de Diffusion* in Brussels, Jean-Louis Sonzogni is a well-known cameraman, both in the film and the television industry. Regularly hired by broadcasters such as TF1, France 2 and France 3, he has worked on numerous TV-films and series, amongst which *Mademoiselle Joubert*, *Avocats & Associés*, *Joséphine ange gardien*, *L'affaire Kergalen...* He was also the director of photography and camera operator on documentaries such as *Edward J. Steichen* by Claude Waringo, *De Gaulle, intime* by René Jean Bouyer, *Doheem* by Christophe Wagner, *Histoire(s) de Jeunesse(s)* by Anne Schroeder, *Portraits d'artistes* (collective) and, more recently, *Plein d'essence* by Geneviève Mersch. Versatile, he also collaborates on short films, TV shows, commercials, institutional films and video clips. *Arabian Nights* is his fifth collaboration with Paul Kieffer after *Die Reise das Land*, *Schacko Klak*, *Le long de la frontière* and *Portraits d'artistes - Bert Theis*.

Véronique Sacrez - Chief production designer

Born in Uccle in 1965, Véronique Sacrez works with Paul Kieffer for the second time since *Schacko Klak*, in 1990, for which she also took care of the sets. Her activity of almost 20 years is illustrated by varied European, even international, productions. Her filmography includes amongst others: *Retrato de familia* by Luis Galvão Teles, *Three Shake-A-Leg Steps To Heaven* by Andy Bausch, *Elles* by Luis Galvão Teles, *Jaime* by Antonio-Pedro Vasconcelos (prize-winner in San Sebastian), *Une liaison pornographique* by Frédéric Fonteyne (prize-winner in Venice), *Un honnête commerçant* by Philippe Blasband (selected in Venice), *Nha Fala* by Flora Gomes (selected in Venice), *La femme de Gilles* by Frédéric Fonteyne (selected in Venice), *Comme tout le monde* by Pierre-Paul Renders and, more recently, *Irina P.* by Sam Garbarski. She was given the Award for Best Artistic Collaboration for her work on *La femme de Gilles* at the Luxembourg Filmprais in October 2005. She is currently preparing the

feature film *Ne te retourne pas* by Marina De Van with in the main roles Sophie Marceau and Monica Bellucci.

Katja Reinert - Chief make-up artist

Born in 1969, Katja Reinert did the make-up of numerous actors since 1992. She has become a reference in film make-up, not only in Luxembourg but also abroad. Creative, she is also active in design and special effects make-up. So far, her "subjects" include actors such as Philippe Leotard (*Black Dju* by Pol Cruchten), John Malkovich (*Shadow of the Vampire* by Elias Merhige), Christophe Lambert (*The Point Men* by John Glen), Roger Moore (*The Enemy* by Tom Kinninmont), Patrick Swayze (*George and the Dragon* by Tom Reeve), Emmanuelle Seigner (*Les Immortels* by Antonio-Pedro Vasconcelos), Didier Bourdon (*Madame Edouard* by Nadine Monfils), Jennifer Jason Leigh (*Rag Tale* by Mary McGuckian), Michèle Laroque (*Comme t'y es belle* by Lisa Azuelos) and, more recently, Marianne Faithfull (*Irina P.* by Sam Garbarski).

Carlo Thoss - Sound engineer

Born in 1967, Carlo Thoss studies sound at the *Institut des Arts et de Diffusion* (I.A.D.) in Louvain-la-Neuve. Right after graduating, he starts his career as sound assistant on Pol Cruchten's *Hochzäitsnuecht* that went on to be selected in Cannes in the "Un Certain Regard" sidebar selection. This film was followed by an almost uninterrupted succession of features, short films and documentaries, Carlo Thoss easily going from one genre to another. Amongst the sixty productions he worked on, one finds for instance *Edward J. Steichen* by Claude Waringo, *Maigret - La nuit du Carrefour* by Alain Tasma, *Prince of Jutland* by Gabriel Axel, *Elles* by Luis Galvão Teles, *Le plaisir et ses petits tracas* by Nicolas Boukhrief, *8 and ½ Women* by Peter Greenaway, *Une liaison pornographique* by Frédéric Fonteyne, *Shadow of the Vampire* by Elias Merhige (feature film selected in Cannes), *C.Q.* by Roman Coppola, *FearDotCom* by Bil Malone, *The Girl With The Pearl Earring* by Peter Webber, *La Femme de Gilles* by Frédéric Fonteyne, *Butterflies* by Max Jacoby (UIP award for Best Short Film in Venice), *Starfly* by Beryl Koltz (prize-winner at Clermont-Ferrant, Méliès d'Or winner for Best Short Film) or *Flawless* by Michael Radford. In October 2005, Carlo Thoss was given the Award for Best Technical Contribution for his whole career at the Filmpräis Luxembourg.

Thierry Faber - Chief editor

After graduating in multimedia-editing at the I.A.D. in Louvain-la-Neuve, Thierry Faber rapidly starts his editing career. From 1999 to 2006, he works on nine short films of very different genres, including *Les Amazones* by Elisabeth Clauss, *If Not, Why Not* a film about dance by Daniel Wiroth (broadcasted on ARTE), *Nuits Amères* by Pol Cruchten, *IvoEva* by Sandy Lorente and *Le gardien du nid*, an animated short film by Olivier Pesch. During the same period, he also edited ten documentaries like, for instance, *Ma vie au Congo* by Paul Kieffer, *Ligne de vie* by Christophe Wagner, *D'Lëtzebuerger am Tour de France* by Paul Kieffer, *Les maîtres du vent* and *Heim ins Reich* both by Claude Lahr, as well as *Corps & Graphies* by Georges Fautsch. Several commercials flesh out his filmography. *Arabian Nights* is the first feature film he edits. In 2003, Thierry Faber was awarded the Prize for Best Artistic Contribution at the Luxembourg Filmpräis.

Magdalena Labuz - Chief costume supervisor

Trained in Rome at the International Academy of Haute Couture and Art of Costume, Magdalena Labuz works since 1999 as costume supervisor and costume designer for theatre and film. After collaborating with Luxembourgish chief costume supervisors Cynthia Dumont and Uli Simon, she makes a name for herself and also becomes head of the costume department on film productions. Her artistic collaborations include *Victoire* by Stéphanie Murat, *Miss Montigny* by Miel Van Hoogenbemt, *Comme tout le monde* by Pierre-Paul Renders and *Comme t'y es belle* by Lisa Azuelos.

Jeannot Sanavia - Composer

After his training as a musician at the Conservatoire of Brussels, Jeannot Sanavia starts teaching at Ettelbruck's Conservatoire in Luxembourg while also working as a concert performer and composer at the same time. He writes and performs original scores for various film productions, including *Une liaison pornographique* and *Max et Bobo* both by Frédéric Fonteyne, *Edward J. Steichen* by Claude Waringo, *Ma vie au Congo* by Paul Kieffer and, more recently, *J'aurai voulu être un danseur* by Alain Berliner.

Brigitte Kerger - Production manager

"Brigitte Kerger and figures", a story that began in 1997 after several years working for Luxair, Luxembourg's national airline company, and in public relations for the international group Up With People. Mainly production manager, but also executive producer, she has worked on six features, eight short films, ten documentaries and fifteen or so commercials. Her filmography includes *Back in Trouble*, *Le club des chômeurs* and *La revanche des chômeurs* all three by Andy Bausch, *J'ai toujours voulu être une sainte* by Geneviève Mersch, *Your Name Is Justyna* by Franco De Pena, *Les fourmis rouges* by Stéphane Carpiaux, *Starfly* by Beryl Koltz, *Schmol* by Sophie Langevin and Jacques Raybaut, as well as *The Language School - Visions of Europe* by Andy Bausch (produced by Zentropa). For Luxembourg's National Audiovisual Centre, she is also in charge of promoting Luxembourgish short films and documentaries at international film festivals.

Listes artistique & technique - Cast & Crew

une production / a production by

SAMSA FILM

réalisé par / directed by **Paul Kieffer**

produit par / produced by **Claude Waringo**

avec / with

Georges **Jules Werner**

Yamina **Sabrina Ouazani**

Nicole Anne-Marie Solvi

le père / the father Marco Lorenzini

le grand-père / the grand-father Camille Olinger

la grand-mère / the grand-mother Marie-Paule von Roesgen

l'oncle / the uncle Serge Tonon

la tante / the aunt Pat Wengler
Jempi Pol Hoffmann
Josée Christiane Rausch
serveuse / waitress Sonja Neumann
chef d'orchestre / conductor Claude Weber
Nanou Nargis Benamor
Hassan Karim Sahoudi
Ben Kouri Arezki Boutrahi
Khalil Nabil Missoumi
décoratrices / decorators Monique Grössl
Christelle Bloszuk
Josef Paul Kieffer
chauffeur de taxi / taxi driver Hamid Mesbah
réceptionniste / receptionist Mohamed Seghir Bendaoud
femme à l'hôtel / woman in hotel Louisa Habani
chef de gare / stationmaster Djamel Bounab
contrôleur train / train ticket Zoheir Yatarien
inspector Aziz Boukrouni
contrôleur bus / bus ticket Ahmed Berrahma
inspector Mohamed Djouhri
chauffeur camion / truck driver Hadil Othmani
vieux gardien / old janitor Loubna Malki
petites filles bergerie / little girls sheepfold Ouarda Bahmed
Lounis Houcine
Belaïd Talhaoui
jeune fille Tabelbala / young girl Ahmed Benaïssa
Tabelbala
chameliers / cameleers

le berger / the shepherd

avec les voix additionnelles de / with additional voices by
Mostefa Stiti & Amid Chakir

scenario / script **Paul Kieffer**
en collaboration avec / in collaboration with Philippe Blasband

directeur de la photographie/director of photography **Jean-Louis Sonzogni**
assisté de / assisted by Carlo Thiel

décors / production design **Véronique Sacrez**
Ramdane Kacer

costumes **Magdalena Labus**
Fatiha Benslimane

maquillage / make-up **Katja Reinert**

assistant-réalisateur / assistant director **Christophe Verdonck**

son / sound **Carlo Thoss**
Thomas Gauder

montage / editing **Thierry Faber**

musique / music **Jeannot Sanavia**

casting **Katja Wolf**
Gerda Diddens
Djamel Bouaboub
Amira Merakchi

direction de production / **Brigitte Kerger-Santos**
production manager

producteur exécutif / executive **Lotfi Bouchouchi**
producer

producteurs associés / associated **Jani Thiltges**
producers **Entre Chien et Loup**
Araneo Belgium

co-producteurs / co-producers **Patrick Quinet**
Helmut Grasser

dossier de presse / presskit **Ricardo J. Tavares** (rédaction & traduction /
writing & translation)
Cropmark (couverture / cover)

en co-production avec / in co-production with
ARTEMIS PRODUCTIONS
ALLEGRO FILM

avec la participation du / with the participation of
Fonds National de Soutien à la Production
Audiovisuelle du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg - FILM FUND Luxembourg

avec l'aide du / with the help of
Tax Shelter du Gouvernement Fédéral de Belgique

avec la participation de / with the participation of
Österreichisches Film Institut

développé avec le soutien du / developed with the support of
Programme MEDIA de la Commission Européenne de l'Action Préparatoire i2i
de la Commission
Européenne et des Ateliers d'écriture d'éQuinoxe TBC - Vienne 2005

CONTACT PRESSE

SAMSA FILM

Lélia di Luca T: (+352) 45 19 60 - 1
238c, rue de Luxembourg F: (+352) 44 24 29
L-8077 Bertrange E: lelia@filmnet.lu
www.samsa.lu www.nuitsdarabie.lu
www.samsa.lu/blognuitsdarabie.lu