

ely
film
society

april
2016

the
notes

Films at Kings Lynn Community
Cinema Club www.klccc.uk

Thursday 12 May — **ONE TWO THREE**

Thursday 9 June — **GRANDMA**

Thursday 7 July — **PHOENIX**

Special Events

Thursday 26 May 7.30-9.30

CLOSE-UPS: **Cities on Screen: Berlin**

Friday 10 June 7.30

Magic Lantern Show

Thursday 16 June 7.30-9.30

CLOSE-UPS: **François Truffaut**

Belleville Rendezvous

Sylvain Chomet,
France 2003

French title *Les Triplettes de Belleville*

Script by Sylvain Chomet

Béatrice Bonifassi Triplets
(singing voice)
Lina Boudreau Triplets (voice)
Michèle Caucheteux (voice)
Jean-Claude Donda (voice)
Mari-Lou Gauthier Triplets (voice)
Charles Linton (singing voice)
Michel Robin (voice)
Monica Viegas (voice)

producer Didier Brunner
co-producer Paul Cadieux
associate producers ...

Regis Ghezlbash & Colin Rose
producer Viviane Vanfleteren

Music Benoît Charest

Film Editing Dominique Brune,
Chantal Colibert Brunner &
Dominique Lefever

Production Design Evgeni Tomov



Madame Souza, an elderly woman, instills in her grandson Champion (for who she acts as his guardian) a love of cycling. As a young man, he does become a dedicated road racer with his grandmother as his trainer. During a mountainous leg of the Tour de France in which Champion is racing, he goes missing. Evidence points to him

being kidnapped. With Champion's overweight and faithful pet dog Bruno at her side, Madame Souza goes looking for Champion. Their trek takes them overseas to the town of Belleville. Without any money, Madame Souza and Bruno are befriended and taken in by three eccentric elderly women, who were once the renowned jazz singing group The Triplets of Belleville.



The first thing that strikes you about this film is the very eccentric animation style. In an age of computer-generated 3D animation, it is refreshing to see how comic book artist Sylvain Chomet employs the techniques of graphic illustration to produce this original piece of animated art. It is so not Disney. In fact even film critic Roger Ebert struggled to write about this film. He began with the word 'weird' and then searched for every synonym he could find, a search which left him still struggling to describe what he had seen. There is no doubt that the style makes much of the grossly distorted and exaggerated caricatures to create a sense of decadence and dissolution, and yet, despite this dark side, the film is still great fun.

On the surface it is a very charming story of a caring grandmother, her hapless grandson and their faithful dog. The veneer of charm is quickly eroded, however, as the narrative takes off in the direction of a gangster thriller, road movie, as well as an old-fashioned Saturday Morning Cinema adventure film. Add to this a plethora of references to a wide range of filmic styles and stories, to vaudeville performers from the 1930s, and a gamut of musical styles, and you begin to marvel at Chomet's inventiveness and very keen eye for meaningful imagery. Almost every frame contains a mass of barely glimpsed details – blink and you'll miss many of them.

Interview with **Sylvain Chomet** on the release of the film in 2003.



What was the main objective in making "Belleville Rendez-Vous"?

I wanted to do things in animation that hadn't been done before. It's a very rigid medium in what people think it should be. It's always got to be for kids. It should bring good feelings, have bad guys and good guys, and end with a moral. But this means there are lots of subjects and things you can't show, like someone smoking a cigarette for example. With "Belleville", the aim was to go against that, and do something that wasn't aimed at kids. It's great that kids can enjoy the film, but it freed us up to go in directions that the animated movie hasn't gone in before.

Why did you choose the Tour De France as the film's subject?

I've always liked the movement of cycling. It's the circular motion of the bicycle, and the shape of the cyclists themselves - especially back in the days when they'd be incredibly spindly with amazingly overdeveloped leg muscles. They're fascinating characters: very nice, timid and shy people. But they often don't

look like they're enjoying the race. I don't think I've ever seen a cyclist looking happy, even when they've won. I've also always thought it was strange that the Tour De France starts and ends at the same point. It's like they're suffering all this hardship, but not actually getting anywhere as a result.

How did you go about developing the characters?

It doesn't come from a drawing. What I get in my mind is an idea of their movement, and I just use the graphics to enhance this. Like with Madame Souza: she's a very small, fragile character, but because she has to drag around this enormous club foot, she can also be quite violent and stubborn. It's one of the things I love about animation: to be able to have two concepts of a character. To see one thing, but feel something else.



NEXT MONTH'S FILM IS
CONTROL
(Anton Corbijn, UK 2007)
Monday 16 May
+ EFS AGM (it'll be brief)

www.elyfilmsociety.com

www.meetup.com/ely-film/

meetup