

Nr 9 – October-November 2007

The French Scene — Mathilde Seigner: A Very Popular Actress

Mathilde Seigner's destiny was inevitable as she was born on January 17th, 1968 to a family of actors; her grandfather, father, mother and sister were all involved in the theatre and, to top it all off, her sister, Emmanuelle, was married to film director Roman Polanski. Mathilde's first important role for the big screen was in *Le Sourire* in 1994, for which she received the Michel Simon prize, and since then she's performed in numerous films and plays.

A Woman of strong character, but with a lot of charm

As well as being endowed with natural beauty, she is a woman of strong character and temperament. Mathilde Seigner is never at a loss for words and has become famous for her *franc parler*. In an interview in the magazine *Psychologies*, she made the statement that she has *un boulot de con* (a stupid job). Her fiery temper naturally leads her to play women who possess strong personalities, such as her roles in movies like *Belle-maman* or *Vénus Beauté*. Her charm and temper obviously appeal to the public. This ebullient temperament blows up literally in *Francorusse* where she plays a serial-killer.

She is also explosive on television where she always speaks her mind. Perhaps because of prudishness or a personal set of values, she has never played a nude scene and she refuses to take part in a sex scene. The same is true for films including scenes with drug addicts; the sight of a needle truly makes her jump.

Born in a family of famous actors

Mathilde, whose grandfather was a director of *La Comédie Française* and an accomplished actor, has had many stage roles and has played in *L'éducation de Rita*, *Le médecin malgré lui*, *L'avare*, *Les fourberies de Scapin*, *Les caprices de Marianne*, and *S'il n'en restait qu'un* by Françoise Dorin.

In 2001, she had a very rewarding year as she took on some roles in art films (like the very nice *Inch' Allah Dimanche*), a movie directed by Georges Miller *La chambre des magiciennes* and especially one face to face encounter with the great Michel Serrault in *Une hirondelle a fait le printemps*, a big success!

At the age of 32, she became a very popular actress who was very much in demand.

With *Mariages* in 2004 then *Tout pour plaire*, two funny stories on the views of women on the life of couples, she became one of the stars in the typical French comic scenes, which was confirmed in the movie *Palais Royal* 2005 directed by Valérie Lemerrier (you can read about Valérie Lemerrier in the previous issue of *French Accent Magazine*, August-September

2007).

In 2007, after the confidential *Danse avec lui*, Mathilde Seigner joined Pascal Elbé and Kad Merad in a comedy called *3 amis* produced by Michel Boujenah (a well-known comic actor in *Trois hommes et un couffin*), before starring in *Détrompez-vous* with François Cluzet, Alice Taglioni and Roschdy Zem. To be released in October.

Vincent Anthonioz

A few DVDs with *Mathilde Seigner*

Vénus beauté (institut) (1999)

Directed by Tony Marshall, with Nathalie Baye, Mathilde Seigner, Audrey Tautou.

Angèle is an aesthetician in Venus Beauté, a beauty institute run by Nadine where customers talk about their problems, both large and small, in between treatments. After work, Angèle spends her time seeing men with whom she tries to establish a minimal relationship made up of sex and of comradeship. She does not believe in love and she has her reasons. But one morning, in a railway station, she meets Antoine who is going to truly love her.

Une hirondelle a fait le printemps (2001)

Directed by Christian Carion with Michel Serrault, Mathilde Seigner.

Sandrine tries to escape the stress of life in Paris and her job as a computer scientist by buying an isolated farm in the Vercors where she hopes to become a farmer. Adrien, an old peasant who wants to sell his farm but does not want to transmit his knowledge, especially to a Parisian girl, ends up selling to her due to financial difficulties. Alone, Sandrine is left to cope with taking care of the goats, looking after the development of an ancient shed in a mountain shelter and setting up an Internet site to sell her products. Sceptical, Adrien watches her transform the farm where he spent his entire life. These two individuals with diametrically opposed personalities and backgrounds are forced by circumstances to live together during a winter and a spring. Little by little, very strong bonds form between them.

Danse avec lui (2007)

Directed by Valérie Guignabodet with Mathilde Seigner, Sami Frey.

Three years after a dramatic break up, Alexandra learns how to live and love again thanks to an unexpected and surprising encounter with a horse back rider.

Coming soon to the French Screens

Détrompez-vous

Coming to movie theatres on October 24, 2007.

Directed by Bruno Dege, Jeanne Le Guillou with François Cluzet, Mathilde Seigner.

A kaleidoscope of 4 couples: Thomas and Carole, Lionel and Lisa make up two official couples; the third couple is secretly living a liaison full of passion... as for the fourth couple, formed by mistake, what are they going to do? Seek revenge? No, think again... They are cleverer and more in love than you think...

“Grand Corps Malade” & Slam

Les voyages en train

*J'crois qu'les histoires d'amour c'est comme les voyages en train,
Et quand j'vois tous ces voyageurs parfois j'aimerais en être un,
Pourquoi tu crois que tant de gens attendent sur le quai de la gare ?
Pourquoi tu crois qu'on flippe autant d'arriver en retard ?*

*Les trains démarrent souvent au moment où l'on s'y attend le moins,
Et l'histoire d'amour t'emporte sous l'oeil impuissant des témoins,
Les témoins c'est tes potes qui te disent au revoir sur le quai,
Ils regardent le train s'éloigner avec un sourire inquiet,
Toi aussi tu leur fais signe et t'imagines leurs commentaires,
Certains pensent que tu t'plantes et qu't'as pas les pieds sur terre,
Chacun y va d'son pronostic sur la durée du voyage,
Pour la plupart le train va dérailler dès l'premier orage.*

*Le grand amour change forcément ton comportement,
Dès l'premier jour faut bien choisir ton compartiment,
Siège couloir ou contre la vitre il faut trouver la bonne place,
Tu choisies quoi une love story de première ou d'seconde classe ?*

*Dans les premiers kilomètres tu n'as d'yeux que pour son visage,
Tu calcules pas derrière la fenêtre le défilé des paysages,
Tu te sens vivant tu te sens léger tu ne vois pas passer l'heure,
T'es tellement bien que t'as presque envie d'embrasser le contrôleur.*

*Mais la magie ne dure qu'un temps et ton histoire bat de l'aile,
Toi tu te dis que tu n'y es pour rien et que c'est sa faute à elle,
Le ronronnement du train te saoule et chaque virage t'écœure,
Faut que tu te lèves que tu marches tu vas te dégourdir le cœur.*

*Et le train ralentit, c'est déjà la fin de ton histoire,
En plus t'es comme un con tes potes sont restés à l'autre gare,*

*Tu dis au revoir à celle que t'appelleras désormais ton ex,
Dans son agenda sur ton nom elle va passer un coup de tipex.*

*C'est vrai que les histoires d'amour c'est comme les voyages en train,
Et quand je vois tous ces voyageurs parfois j'aimerais en être un,
Pourquoi tu crois que tant de gens attendent sur le quai de la gare ?
Pourquoi tu crois qu'on flippe autant d'arriver en retard ?*

*Pour beaucoup la vie se résume à essayer de monter dans le train,
A connaître ce qu'est l'amour et se découvrir plein d'entrain,
Pour beaucoup l'objectif est d'arriver à la bonne heure,
Pour réussir son voyage et avoir accès au bonheur.
Il est facile de prendre un train encore faut-il prendre le bon,
Moi je suis monté dans deux trois rames mais c'était pas le bon wagon,
Car les trains sont capricieux et certains sont inaccessibles,
Et je ne crois pas tout le temps qu'avec la SNCF c'est possible.*

*Il y a ceux pour qui les trains sont toujours en grève,
Et leurs histoires d'amour n'existent que dans leurs rêves,
Et y a ceux qui foncent dans le premier train sans faire attention,
Mais forcément ils descendront déçus à la prochaine station,
Y a celles qui flippent de s'engager parce qu'elles sont trop émotives,
Pour elles c'est trop risqué de s'accrocher à la locomotive,
Et y a les aventuriers qu'enchaînent voyage sur voyage,
Dès qu'une histoire est terminée ils attaquent une autre page.*

*Moi après mon seul vrai voyage j'ai souffert pendant des mois,
On s'est quitté d'un commun accord mais elle était plus d'accord que moi,
Depuis je traîne sur le quai je regarde les trains au départ,
Y a des portes qui s'ouvrent mais dans une gare je me sens à part.*

*Il paraît que les voyages en train finissent mal en général,
Si pour toi c'est le cas accroche-toi et garde le moral,
Car une chose est certaine y aura toujours un terminus,
Maintenant tu es prévenu la prochaine fois tu prendras le bus.*

Who is “Grand Corps Malade”?

Fabien Marsaud, alias “Grand Corps Malade” (Large sick body), is a *slammeur* (slam poet) who was born on July 31st, 1977 in Blanc-Mesnil in the suburbs of Paris.

In July of 1997, Marsaud was working as a camp counsellor in a holiday camp for children (*une colonie de vacances*) for the city of Saint-Denis. A dive into the shallow water of a swimming pool left him paralyzed, and doctors told him he would never walk again. After more than a year of physical therapy and through his courage and determination, he regained the partial use of his legs. This tragic incident led him to adopt the stage name, “Grand Corps Malade”.

In October, 2003, he performed his first slam poetry in a Parisian bar. Later, one of his friends offered to transpose his pieces into music. His first album, *Midi 20*, was released in March,

2006. This title comes from a song on the album where the lyrics reduce life to the time frame of one day. He talks about Saint-Denis where he grew up, about an unhappy love affair, but also about the pain linked to his accident there.

The first album received a lot of media exposure and allowed the French public to discover slam poetry. The album is for the most part *a capella*, but sometimes the poems are accompanied with minimal melody. The lyrics are recited in a natural voice and are perfectly clear. “Grand Corps Malade” is a very sensitive poet with a rich, deep voice who knows how to evoke everyday experiences with a language that everyone can relate to. It is difficult not to be touched by his poetry.

Le slam (slam poetry)

A poetry slam is a competition where poets read or recite original work (or, more rarely, that of others). These performances are then judged on a numeric scale by previously selected members of the audience.

Originally created by Mark Smith in Chicago in the eighties, slam poetry quickly spread throughout the world because of the media attention it attracted. It brings a new and fresh approach to poetry and highlights the art of public poetic performance.

The slam takes place in public places, bars, coffee houses, theatres, MJC, cinemas, any venue that can bring poets and an audience together. It also encourages the introduction of verbal poetry in different and unusual places, such as post offices, bookshops, schools, hospitals, prisons or open-air markets, for instance. The only condition for participating is to register in advance with the announcer. The slam makes it possible for anyone to express themselves with complete freedom of style and on any subject. In France, more and more stages have been taken over by this form of art, and poetry slams continue to spread throughout the country.

Vincent Anthonioz

Listen to Grand Corps Malade recite his *Les voyages en train* thanks to YouTube:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdyJVJQia6k

Un oiseau

*Je suis un oiseau
avec un chapeau
Un oiseau zo-zo
Avec un petit pipeau
Quand je vole là-haut
Je vois les ruisseaux
Les moulins et les bateaux
Et je leur dis à bientôt !*