

Paulo Branco presents

based on the novel by **Georges Simenon**

THE BLUE ROOM

a film by **Mathieu Amalric**



OFFICIAL SELECTION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

Léa Drucker
Mathieu Amalric
Stéphanie Cléau
Laurent Poitrenaux

WITH SERGE BOZON · BLUTCH · PHOTOGRAPHY CHRISTOPHE BEAUCARNE · SOUND OLIVIER MAUVEZIN · SEVERIN FAVRIAU · STÉPHANE THIÉBAUT · EDITING FRANÇOIS GEDIGIER
MUSIC GREGOIRE HETZEL · SET DESIGN CHRISTOPHE OFFRET · EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JOHN SIMENON · PRODUCED BY PAULO BRANCO · AN ALFAMA FILMS PRODUCTION
CO-PRODUCED WITH FILM(S) · ARTE FRANCE CINÉMA · WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMÉE
AND CANAL+ · CINE+ · ARTE FRANCE · IN ASSOCIATION WITH COFINOVA 10 · WITH THE SUPPORT OF LA RÉGION DES PAYS DE LA LOIRE · IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CNC



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RELEASED ON THE
16th MAI

Produced and distributed by **Alfama Films**
www.lachambrebleue-lefilm.com

CAST

Léa Drucker: Delphine Gahyde
Mathieu Amalric: Julien Gahyde
Stéphanie Cléau: Esther Despierre
Laurent Poitrenaux: The examining magistrate
Serge Bozon: The captain of gendarmerie
Blutch: The psychologist

TECHNICAL TEAM

Photography: **Christophe Beaucarne**
Sound: **Olivier Mauvezin, Séverin Favriau** and **Stéphane Thiébaud**
Editing: **François Gedigier**
Screenplay: **Stéphanie Cléau** et **Mathieu Amalric**
Music : **Grégoire Hetzel**
Set Designer: **Christophe Offret**
Executive producer: **John Simenon**
Produced by **Paulo Branco**

A co-production **Alfama Films Production, film(s), ARTE France Cinéma,**
With the participation of the **Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image Animée**
CANAL+, CINE+, ARTE France
In association with **Cofinova 10**
With the support of the **La Région des Pays de la Loire**

This film was made in collaboration with **Georges Simenon Limited**

International sales **Alfama Films**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Duration: 76 minutes
Support: DCP
Format: 1.33
Sound: 5.1
Visa: 136.519

DISTRIBUTION

ALFAMA FILMS
Elisabeth PERLIE
Mirana RAKOTOZAFY
Maud CAROFF
78 rue du Turbigo 75003 PARIS
Phone: + 33 1 42 01 84 75
Mobile: + 33 6 63 86 77 02
Fax: + 33 1 42 01 08 30
elisabeth.alfamafilms@orange.fr
mirana.alfamafilms@orange.fr
maud.alfamafilms@orange.fr

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

LE PUBLIC SYSTEME CINEMA
Alexis DELAGE TORIEL
Céline PETIT
Phone: +33 1 41 34 20 32
Phone: +33 1 41 34 23 50
adelagetoriel@lepublicsystemecinema.fr
cpetit@lepublicsystemecinema.fr
www.lepublicsystemecinema.fr



SYNOPSIS

- "Seriously, Julien, if I were suddenly free, could you free yourself too?"

- "Say again?"

A man and a woman, secretly in love, alone in a room. They desire each other, want each other, even bite each other. In the afterglow, they share a few sweet nothings. The man at least seems to believe they were nothing. Now under investigation by the police and the courts, Julien fails to find the words.

"Life is different when you live it and when you go back over it after."

What happened? What is he accused of?...

GEORGES SIMENON

Georges Simenon, born in 1903 in Liège, is the most read Belgian writer in the world and the third of French-language authors, after Jules Verne and Alexandre Dumas. If the success of his novels has partly overshadowed the rest of his work, it has to be remembered that Simenon also wrote short stories, articles and reports under his name and even gallant tales under a pseudonym.

Simenon left school at the age of fifteen and began to write in the news in brief column of **The Gazette of Liège**. His first work **Au Pont des Arches** was written in 1920. He moved to Paris two years later and began by publishing short stories

and tales in various newspapers. In 1930, he gave birth to his most famous character, detective Maigret. The following year, Simenon began working on film adaptations of his works with Jean Renoir. While writing very prolifically, he spent much of his life traveling around the world. He even moved to the United States at a time, and then to Quebec. His last novel, **Maigret et Monsieur Charles** (193rd of his career) was published in 1972. Although he was celebrated all over, he then retreated gradually from public life to write his **Intimate Memoirs**. Simenon died in Lausanne on the 4th of September 1989.



INTERVIEW WITH MATHIEU AMALRIC

Is it the heaviness, or the slowness inherent in your adaptation project of *The Red and the Black* by Stendhal which precipitated the launching of *The Blue Room*?

No, it's really just to meet Paulo Branco in the street during the shooting of Roman Polanski's film. Paulo, he is like a soothsayer, he felt I would need centuries for Stendhal. It is deeply moving when someone tells you « *Do something, shoot! Don't you want to do something in three weeks ?* » I searched, and there it was, we all have a book by Simenon that we found and read some day in the country house of we-no-longer-know-who. I don't even know where this book comes from, who I stole it from. It is a book that I had already used for ***On Tour***. In the scenario, we had call the final scene « *the blue room* », and there it was: a man and a woman. What does finally remain in life, apart from two bodies attracted to each other?

Very quickly, I said to myself: in four weeks, this, ***The Blue Room***, is something I can do. It turned out that the rights to the novel were free, which surprised me a lot. There are so many people who wanted to bring it to the big screen: Maurice Pialat went very far into the adaptation, with Jacques Fieschi. Catherine Deneuve was supposed to do it with André Téchiné. Depardieu asked Chabrol to think about it. It is even said that the Dardenne brothers...

It's surprising that *The blue room* should follow *On Tour*. One could imagine that *The Blue Room* is a way to turn your back on *On Tour* to do the opposite of an almost Dionysian film, which advocated letting go and movement.

I haven't thought about that at all. It was rather a novel that haunted me for a long time, and written by Simenon, a guy who writes at full speed. Thereby inviting me to film quickly myself.

What also attracts me is the alloy of hot and cold, and what can drive men crazy: an illegible woman! "*I mistook her for a cold woman, a haughty woman, a statue.*" We are here facing the abyss of sexuality and attraction, which is unspeakable. What is fascinating with Simenon is that everyone forces him to put it into words.

When he wrote this novel in 1963, in Epalinges in Switzerland, Simenon was in a phase of permanent self-flagellation, such as "*Women are witches, I shouldn't have done it.*" It is a novel of punishment regarding sexuality – or regarding his own exuberant sexuality. And with Stephanie Cléau - who adapted the novel with me – we tried to erase it as we could.

I drew up a list of enemy films, films I had to knowingly discard, whatever their value. ***The Devil is a Woman*** by Josef von Sternberg for example: I did not want Esther to be a vamp. I wanted her to be just an unreadable woman, a priori without seduction weapons. For other reasons, ***Garde à Vue*** by Claude Miller was also an enemy film, as regards the interrogatories and the convocation of flash backs.

Also, there was the simple pleasure of the whodunit, who killed who? Who is dead? With this structure going backward.

Precisely, this complex narrative structure, like a mosaic, does not seem to help making a film in a short time, particularly at the stage of editing

At the stage of the screenplay, written in two columns, we already wanted the sound and image to make war on each other, which leads to a particular narrative arrangement. Therefore, I managed to have the most time possible for editing. The schedule permitted it, since we shot in two parts, in July and in November, with the ability to start editing in the meantime.

Beyond that, we really had to work upstream, to insist on the preparation. With a real, full criminal record, updated with the help of forensic scientists, compared to what could be done in 1963.

I knew it would be a short film, B movies type, in the spirit of Jacques Tourneur's films produced by RKO - including a film entitled ***Nightfall. Angel Face*** by Otto Preminger was also a flagship.

At what point did the choice of the 1/33 format step in? - A format that Americans called the classic ratio, which was a bit obsolete before Gus Van Sant with *Elephant* and Wes Anderson with *The Grand Budapest Hotel* updated it.

It came very early, in the presages of the conception. In ***The Blue Room*** we are dealing with lonesome and held up characters. I knew that there would be no camera movements to bind, to join the protagonists together. Even in the love scenes, where we focus on reminiscences rather than on openly sensual things, it is not sensuality, nor caress. And therefore, it does not allow virtuosity. The use of Panoramic is not suitable when it is that frozen.

It is obvious at the beginning of the film, where blood, sweat, semen, are like impeded by large fixed shots, almost inserts, which pictorially evoke vanities or still lifes, which will suck up sensuality.

As in the first sentence of the novel: the moment induces afterward decomposition.

Not everyone uses it for this purpose, but here, the 1/33 is intended as a format that isolates, that traps?

With Christophe Beaucarne, the Director of Photography, we asked ourselves, after having done some tests: whether to use Widescreen or 1 /33. Very quickly, the latter format imposed itself. Christophe thought that it washed his eye. We live in a time where everything is elongated; we need only to see the size of the postcards we sell now. Therefore, we chose the opposite view. And the sensuality of the Cinemascope did not seem to fit this relationship.

We decided to focus on still shots, but without religion. One could see it as a joke but sincerely the aesthetic is not very far from the one of *Derrick*, as simple as that. No harmony, rather jarring. No ostentatious staging, just enough to follow a story, to the first degree.

We indeed feel a rejection of the doxa that accompanies the fixed shots. Often, we associate fixed-shots and duration, with the risk of complacency sometimes. Here, the stills are particularly short, sharp as a blade or a sash announcing the fatal outcome.

On the contrary, the first kiss - at fall in the forest, is accompanied by a camera movement and treated in post production to signify that we are in the wrong register, and that *they shouldn't have done it*.

In addition to this sequence, the idea was always to tap the same nail, to insist on this thing one cannot name, a non-shareable miracle, out of life, out of everything, which is the mystery of attraction between two bodies, which only belongs to two people. We tried to make this attraction to somehow gangrene the character of the judge.

What also touches me a lot with Simenon, is that we are all alike, no one is safe, and I think it's very honest of him.

The story has a very steady tempo, particularly with regards to the revelations. As we peel an onion, to borrow a metaphor from Simenon. However, doubts remain: Who killed? Nothing is certain, even if it is understood that Julien is primarily a willing victim. Was it clearer in the novel?

Much less. In the novel - which once again really puts self-flagellation forward - he is indeed a willing victim. We tried to remove that as much as possible.

I wanted this permanent pleasure of doubt, first of all on him, then on the fact it's possible that she is not guilty either. With Simenon, there is often the idea that lovers would be innocent. Concerning the role of the mother, I insisted a bit, I even re-did a shot in the pharmacy. Editing, we had been too subtle on the mother, and it was hard to understand what goes through Julien when he listens to this "red-haired woman."

Did you already know, while writing it with Stéphanie Cléau, that the roles of Esther and Julien would be for you both?

Stéphanie is an adapter for the theater, she is not an actress at all, she is even the opposite of an actress -to have her picture taken is already torture for her. And that interested me. This woman, we do not know who she is, she embodies the threat of the unknown. Interpreting Julien myself, it was interesting for my official wife to also be an official actress. If the lover also had a recognizable face it would induce, as always, a rivalry between two actresses, which I did not want.

And there this the game with the couple: we play lovers while we've been living together for nine years; it has to do with the unspeakable once again.

On several occasions, the music reminds me of Georges Delerue, including the score he created for *The Woman Next Door*. And it is at that time that I came to realize the obvious relationship between the two films.

Of course, I immediately thought of *The Woman Next Door*. I also knew that Truffaut loved Simenon, including *The Blue Room* that he knew very well. After having seen *The Woman Next Door* again with Stéphanie, it appeared to us as essential to remove the "punishment" side, dear to Simenon. It is on that level that *The Woman Next Door* was a guide.

To get back to the music, at first I did not see the need for it. And then, thanks to *The Woman Next Door*, thanks to Hitchcock then Preminger, appeared the idea of lyricism. One day, Stéphanie put a disc of Ravel, the *Prelude to the Night* from *Rhapsodie espagnole* and everything was there. The music therefore came from Ravel, relayed by Bernard Hermann. We started editing the film with Ravel and Dimitri Tiomkin: lyricism and anguish. I needed warmth, and at that point I thought of Grégoire Hetzel, who had already made the music of *Wimbledon stage* and who is not afraid to go there. There was room for the music to take charge of this aspiration, for the lovers, to go there together.

To summon Bernard Hermann is not innocent. We talked about Truffaut, and then Hitchcock: "to shoot love scenes like murder scenes". There is also this rather astonishing sequence, the one of the ladder and the glass table where you confront the notion of suspense.

There were these words Esther sends, including the notorious "your turn". How to get someone to understand that it also means "your turn to kill"?

In the novel, there is exactly this dialogue, this scene between the two spouses. It happens at the table, he has been drinking, he gets angry, and that's all. I was looking for something, I did not know how to do it. And then came the story of the seasons, Christmas decorations, and there I found it. With the help of Grégoire's music, a surging anxiety.

You mentioned Hitchcock, Tourneur, Preminger. Other marks appear: Chabrol of course (who adapted Simenon), and by extension, Fritz Lang's American period, the one of *Beyond a reasonable doubt*.

Yes, Lang, indeed, especially in the sequence of the trial. Chabrol, I had a feeling I did not even need to worry about it, it would necessarily be there - the bourgeois drama, the passion, the provincial town. But without Chabrol's causticity, absent from Simenon's writing, a writer of great tenderness.

The difficulty of the trial was to come to the point where the viewer does not tell himself he will attend a resolution, to project him onto something else. And there is Stendhal, ***The Red and the Black***, which came back and helped me enormously - this is also why the character is called Julien, like Sorel. Simenon was also crazy about Stendhal. There is a clear link between the treatment of the trial in ***The Red and The Black*** and the absence of Tony / Julien during the trial of The Blue Room. Not to be in the hope of a turn of events, but to end up upward, in a novelistic and lyrical style. I wanted the lovers to be able to talk through the blue tapestry. By chance, the tapestry of the court, with this pattern of bees, allowed it. We tried the romantic challenge: make it or break it. We thought we could go that far, that the film could accept it

Interview conducted in Paris, 8th of April 2014



MATHIEU AMALRIC

Mathieu Amalric, born the 25th of October 1965, lives in Paris. Discovers Cinema thanks to Otar Losseliani in 1984.

Has worked as assistant-director; stage manager, assistant-editor or sutler for Louis Malle, Danièle Dubroux, Peter Handke, Alain Tanner, J.C.Monteiro or Romain Goupil while making short films.

In 1991, he makes the acquaintance of Arnaud Desplechin at the Angers Premier Plans Film Festival, who invents him as an actor. Since then, he does both.

Director

The Blue Room – 2014

Next to Last (1963) (Short) - 2013

Sfar (drawings) (TV documentary) - 2011

L'illusion comique (TV) - 2010

On Tour - 2010

La chose publique (TV) - 2003

Le stade de Wimbledon - 2001

Mange ta soupe - 1997

8bis (Short) - 1994

Staring at the Ceiling (Short) - 1992

Sans Rires (Short) - 1990

Marre de café (Short) - 1984

Actor (Selective filmography)

The Grand Budapest Hotel by Wes Anderson - 2014

The Venus in Fur by Roman Polanski - 2013

Love is the Perfect Crime by Arnaud and Jean-Marie Larrieu - 2014

Jimmy Picard by Arnaud Desplechin - 2013

You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet by Alain Resnais - 2012

Cosmopolis by David Cronenberg - 2012

Chicken with Plums by Marjane Satrapi - 2011

Wild Grass by Alain Resnais - 2009

Les Derniers Jours du Monde by Arnaud and Jean Marie Larrieu -2009

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly by Julian Schnabel - 2008

Mesrine: Public Enemy by Jean-François Richet - 2008

Quantum of Solace by Marc Forster - 2008

On War by Bertrand Bonello - 2008

A Christmas Tale by Arnaud Desplechin - 2007

A Secret by Claude Miller - 2007

The Very Big Apartment by Pascal Thomas - 2006

Actresses by Valeria Bruni Tedeschi - 2006

Munich by Steven Spielberg - 2005

Kings and Queens by Arnaud Desplechin - 2004

A Man, a Real One by Arnaud and Jean Marie Larrieu - 2003

The false Servant by Benoît Jacquot - 1999

Late August, Early September by Olivier Assayas - 1998

Alice et Martin by André Téchiné - 1998

Genealogies of a Crime by Raúl Ruiz - 1996

Diary of a Seducer by Danièle Dubroux - 1995

Comment je me suis disputé...(ma vie sexuelle) by Arnaud Desplechin - 1996

Les favoris de la lune by Otar losseliani - 1984



LÉA DRUCKER

Léa Drucker was formed at the Rue Blanche, and began her career as an actress in theatre, interpreting classical pieces (**the Misanthrope**) as well as contemporary ones (**Plaidoyer Pour un Boxer**). She made her debut in Cinema with **La Thune** by Philippe Galland and she can be seen in **Rai** by Thomas Gilou, **Assassin(s)** by Mathieu Kassovitz or even **Chaos** by Coline Serreau.

In 1995, she participated in the CANNES TALENTS under the direction of Cédric Klapisch.

Léa Drucker held the first role in **Papillons de Nuit** by John R. Pepper, from the play Danny et la Grande Bleue that she had created for theatre, and kept on with **Hypnotized and Hysterical** by Claude Duty and **In my skin** by Marina De Van.

She then dedicated herself to comedy with **Bed and breakfast** with the Director Claude Duty before appearing in Gilles Lellouche's **Narco: the secret adventures of Gustave Klopp**, alongside Guillaume Canet, and **Akoibon** by Edouard Baer. Drucker then found more dramatic roles with **Dans tes Rêves** by Denis Thybaud and **Virgil**, where she co-starred with Jalil Lespert.

Other films were an opportunity for her to make a bridge between comedy and drama as **Teen spirit** adapted from Virginie Despentes and **The man of my life** by Zabou Breitman.

Selective filmography

The Blue Room by Mathieu Amalric - 2014
Just Before Losing Everything (Short) by Xavier Legrand - 2013
Je suis supporter du Standard by Riton Liebman - 2013
Le Grand Méchant Loup by Nicolas & Bruno- 2013
Low profile by Cécilia Rouaud - 2012
Woul I lie to you ? 3 by Thomas Gilou - 2012
Pauline et François by Renaud Fely - 2010
Les Meilleurs Amis du monde by Julien Rambaldi - 2010
Pièce montée by Denys Granier-Deferre – 2010
Cyprien by David Charhon - 2009
Sunny spells by Diastème - 2008
Coluche, l'histoire d'un mec by Antoine de Caunes - 2008
Teen spirit by Olivier de Plas - 2007
The tiger brigades by Jérôme Cornuau - 2006
The man of my life by Zabou Breitman – 2006
Virgil by Mabrouk el Mechri - 2005
Akoibon by Édouard Baer - 2005
Dans tes rêves by Denis Thybaud – 2005
Narco : The secret adventures of Gustave Klopp by Tristan Aurouet and Gilles Lellouche - 2004

Subsequently, Léa Drucker figured in the credits of films inspired by real facts like **The Tiger brigades** lying in the Paris of 1907 or the biopic **Coluche, l'Histoire d'un Mec**, where she played the wife of the famous comedian, performed by François-Xavier Demaison.

In 2009, she starred in **Cyprien** alongside Elie Semoun before becoming the wife of Christophe Alévêque for the time of **Pièce montée**, then Pierre-François Martin-Laval's in **Les Meilleurs Amis du Monde**. The following year, Léa Drucker joined the cast of **Pauline et François**, alongside Laura Smet and Yannick Renier.

In 2012, she starred in **Would I lie to you 3**, by Thomas Gilou, **Low profile** by Cecilia Rouaud, alongside Vanessa Paradis and Denis Menochet, and on stage at the Festival in Figeac in the play **Demain il Fera Jour**, directed by Michel Fau.

In 2013, Drucker was in **À la Française**, directed by Edouard Baer, and at the Théâtre de l'oeuvre in **Demain il Fera Jour** directed by Michel Fau. Film wise, she starred in **Je Suis Supporter du Standard** by Riton Liebman and also **Le Grand Méchant Loup** by Nicolas Charlet and Bruno Lavaine.



STÉPHANIE CLÉAU

After studying at L'École du paysage in Versailles and with a Master in geography, Stéphanie Chiavetta encountered - during her Master's degree in theatre at the Paris III university - the director Jean-François Peyret and became his assistant (**Des Chimères en Automne, les Variations Darwin**). She then worked with the directors: Cyril Teste (**Flux**), Julien Lacroix (**Excédent de Poids, Amorphe**), Robert Cantarella (**Classiques en Temps de Crise**), Christophe Fiat (**Laurent Sauvage n'Est Pas Une Walkyrie and L'indestructible Madame Richard Wagner**), Gilles Gaston-Dreyfus and Nicolas Boukhrief (**Mon Ami Louis**).

She has collaborated with Nicolas Bigards as an adapter on texts by Roland Barthes (**Barthes le Questionneur**), André Breton (**Nadja**), Dos Passos (**Trilogie USA**), Antonio Lobo Antunes (**Fado Alexandrino, Traité des Passions de l'Âme**), James Ellroy (**American Tabloid**).

Stéphanie has guided the directors Mathieu Amalric and Noémie Lvovsky, actors in their own film (**On Tour** and **Camille rewinds**). She has filmed and published a video logbook of the rehearsals of the play **Ex Vivo / In Vitro** by Jean-François Peyret.

La Morale des Ménages was created at the 104 in Paris, in January 2014, and will be resumed at the Théâtre de la Bastille in October.



LAURENT POITRENAUX

Laurent Poitrenaux has done most of his studies at the school Théâtre en actes, directed by Lucien Marchal.

For theatre, his actor career led him to work with different directors, such as Christian Schciaretti, Thierry Bedart, Éric Vigner, Yves Beaunesne, Didier Galas, Daniel Janneteau with whom he played **Iphigénie**, and who he will soon get back to in a project adapted from **The Iliad** in the next biennale de la danse in Lyon 2014. With François Berreur, he has created - among other things - **Ébauche d'un Portrait** at the Théâtre Ouvert, which won the Prix du Syndicat de la Critique award.

During the Avignon Festival, in 2011 and 2012, he has created **Jan Karski** and **La Mouette** with Arthur Nauzyciel.

For many years, he has regularly worked with Ludovic Lagarde on several adaptations of texts by Olivier Cadiot, such as **Le**

Colonel des Zouaves, **Fairy Queen** and more recently **Le Mage en Été**, created at the Avignon Festival in 2010. Recently he also acted, always with Ludovic Lagarde, une **Trilogie Büchner** presented at the Théâtre de la Ville and **Lear is in Town** created at the festival of Avignon 2013. And he will soon play **The Miser** by Molière under his own direction.

Most recently, he participated in the creation of Philippe Minyana's last play, directed by Marcial Di Fonzo Bo, **Une Femme at the Théâtre** de la Colline.

