

RÉCIFILMS PRESENTS

OFFICIAL SELECTION



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INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

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A FILM BY RUDI ROSENBERG



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Rephael GHRENASSIA  
Guillaume CLOUD ROUSSEL

Joshua RACCAH  
Johanna LINDSTEDT

Géraldine MARTINEAU  
With the participation of  
Max BOUBLIL

# The New Kid

( LE NOUVEAU ) A FILM BY RUDI ROSENBERG

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## SYNOPSIS

Benoit's first week at his new school does not go to plan. He's roughed up by Charles's gang, the popular kids, and the only pupils who welcome him with any kindness are the «nerds». Fortunately, there's Johanna, a pretty Swedish girl who Benoit makes friends with and whom he falls for. However, little by little she drifts away to join Charles' gang. On his uncle's advice, Benoit organises a party and invites his entire class. It's his chance to become popular and get Johanna back.



# INTERVIEW

## WITH RUDI ROSENBERG

### Where did this project start?

I had already made two short films about adolescence, 13 YEARS OLD and AGLAEE. I wanted to remain in this world by trying to tell a story that was both personal and at the same time universal. The character for The New Kid came to me almost by itself. I think that I always had the subject inside me because I was this «new kid» myself at school and I had problems integrating due to my timidity. And also, everyone has been the new kid at least once in their life...

### Why are you so attached to this age in particular?

Teenagers express their feelings in a funny way. We often guess by chance what they're feeling because they still haven't learnt to hide them properly, which as adults we're used to doing. It amuses me and it touches me.

It's without doubt also due to nostalgia as I like to reconnect with this period through my memories.

It's specifically the 4th year (Grade 8 in US/Year 9 UK) which interests me. It's a transitional year when the contrast between the maturity of the pupils is the most obvious. Where, despite the age, we are not all in the same boat: there are those who are still clearly children, who suck their thumb, carry their schoolbag, and the others who have become real teenagers, who smoke, organise parties and go out with girls. I thought that the confrontation between these two worlds would offer rich of comic territory.

### How have you worked on the dialogue so that it seems so natural and never falsely like «a teenager»?

My idea was never to describe the current generation. Young people today express themselves with new slang expressions and use social networks but all of that will be out of fashion in a few years. On the other hand, the embarrassing situations, the moments of joy, the need to be part of a group, the desire to be cool etc., they are timeless. I therefore made sure to get rid of as many of the language tics as possible.



It seems to me that it's exactly that kind of trick that can, in some teenager films, give it an inauthentic feel or even make it over the top, as if it needed to prove to young people that we know what it is like to be them. It was important as well that the film spoke to everyone. I wanted a nostalgic adult or a teenager today to see themselves in the characters, beyond the fact we use some recent music or a current piece of vocabulary. Incidentally for the music in the film, I really didn't want songs linked to right now. I have, for example, used Ray Charles and even a track by David Guetta from the 2000's. During filming, some teenagers were quite hard on the film. They told me: «It's complete rubbish: the music isn't famous, we never see us on social networks, we don't drink, it's not dirty enough!»

However, to my great surprise, when we organised screenings, they adored the film.

«The New Kid» evokes «400 Blows...»

I wanted to make a film with adolescents who did stupid stuff. My memories of being a teenager and having friends is of doing stuff that was completely idiotic : my childhood friend was actually Max Boubil who plays the role of the uncle. At his house, we spent our time throwing coke out of the window - he lived above a hairdressers -, we made prank calls, repainted the walls of his living room with soup...the whole film was built on this desire. I wanted to show kids who laughed while doing things that are a bit silly and have the story of their friendship take place naturally.

There are a lot of films about a group of friends who are already together. With THE NEW KID, the idea was to look at the moment just before all that and to focus on the creation of a group, at its birth. I think that there is something beautiful at that age: without knowing each other we become mates in five seconds and it can last for a week or an entire lifetime. The birth of friendship at that age - the spark that goes off - it's very powerful. There is something profound and free which the teenagers are obviously not aware of. Making a friend when we've become an adult, it's also beautiful, but it's maybe more aware, less spontaneous.

**We get the feeling that adults don't exist in your world...**

I really wanted it to be immersive. When I was a kid, I loved the TV show THE WONDER YEARS. But as soon as there were scenes with the parents, I got bored. So I said to myself that if I were to ever write a story one day, it would be without adults! The only adult here is Max Boublil's character but can we really call him an adult?

**The presence of Max Boublil is funny, as the kind godfather..**

Yes. As a teenager, who hasn't known this kind of adult, an uncle or a godfather, that we have underestimated? The one who gave us advice that we listened to, that we admired. And twenty years later we see them again and we understand: «but this guy was a loser!» Which is now my case in the eyes of my nephews. Max was the perfect actor for the character of Greg. Greg should be physically quite attractive as a former player who knows all about women. But also quite good at comedy to make the uncool side of the character believable.

**Where have you filmed it?**

At the Montaigne school in Paris. I really insisted on filming there as it is in the neighbourhood which specifically corresponds to the world in which I wanted to set it: a place where we feel the importance of social codes and the excluded nature of some pupils. The extras have, for the most part, been chosen there. The underlying idea for the story that I wanted to tell is that the real victory consists of freeing yourself from the looks from other people.

It's what Benoit, the new kid, achieves at the end. The contrast in appearance between the marginalised - Benoit's gang - and the other pupils needs to be strong so that this pathway is clear to the public. And also, a few streets away, there is Henri VI school where LA BOUM, a reference film for me, was filmed...

#### How did the casting of the children take place?

I wrote the script at the same time as the casting. We made a pact with my producers: if the script wasn't good enough, no matter how far we'd advanced on the choice of actors, we needed to be ready to abandon the project and if we don't find the ideal cast, we should equally be prepared to give up. As it happens until the last month before filming, as we hadn't unearthed the actor to play Benoit, the hero of the film, we were saying to ourselves that we'd film the following year or never... The mad casting lasted nearly 10 months.

I was looking at first for children who had never acted before. To find these «rare pearls» we worked with over thirty people all over France but also in Sweden and Belgium who were practically head hunters.

We even obtained authorisation to go to schools and canteens. Thanks to that, we saw more than 5000 youngsters try out. During the entire casting period, I insisted that we make the worst students come, the ones at the bottom of the class, the marginalised, those who are often in detention or excluded. We really didn't want calm children: we needed children who liked to go mad, to be stupid and to laugh. We ended up finding them, but filming was not at all like a holiday, that's the least I would say. For me it was a gruelling experience, though there were moments of intense joy. I was their mate, their big brother but also the director and I could therefore be tough sometimes. We were really lucky that they got on really well with each other.

#### Was there a lot of improvisation on set?

Yes, some. I let it run without cutting. I shot the youngsters while they were rehearsing and laughing while waiting for the filming to start. I looked for it, I waited, and that's how I found myself with 250 hours of footage!



The editing was therefore very long - seven months in total - and involved a number of editors and assistants who worked with the chief editor. I edited quite a few sequences myself. I hope that all this effort is invisible to the viewer. The aim was for everything to appear simple and spontaneous. As if there was no work behind it all... Kids, when we put them in front of a camera, can turn out to be catastrophic if they are poorly directed.

But when they have a go and set off in the right direction, they bring incredible charm to the screen. What I like the most is that things happen for real: for example, the fits of laughter are real fits of laughter that happen in the scene where Max teaches them how to tease someone or in the one where they put the condoms on their heads. The group of friends really existed...we can see that in the «making of».



# FILMOGRAPHY

2015 **THE NEW KID** LE NOUVEAU  
2009 **AGLAÉE** (SHORT FILM)  
2008 **A FISHY TALE** UNE HISTOIRE LOUCHE (SHORT FILM)  
2007 **13 YEAR OLD** 13 ANS (SHORT FILM)



# CHARACTERS

BENOÎT



Benoit is a «normal» boy. He must be for the personalities of the three marginalised pupils, who are around him, to come out so clearly. When he arrives in his new class, Benoit doesn't have the weapons he needs to be respected (fashion sense, wit, etc....). But he will soon learn as he's an intelligent boy...

JOSHUA



Joshua (13 years old) is always out of step with the others. His way of thinking is like that of a seven year old boy with all the naivety, creativity and poetry of that age. Socially, he is the biggest «loner» in the class, a real pariah. Joshua is full of little obsessions, like for example keeping his keys around his neck so as to never risk forgetting them somewhere or his holey jogging bottoms that he wears everyday.

## CONSTANTIN



Constantin on the contrary is 40 years old in his head. He wears striped shirts tucked into his high waisted jeans, his glasses are wonky and his brace makes speaking difficult. He puts himself forward each year for the election to be the class delegate but has never won. He has given himself the mission of doing good for those around him, like defending the weakest or starting a choir to «create a good atmosphere in the class and form ties between the pupils». However he is so clumsy that he never manages it and always finds himself in embarrassing situations.

## AGLAÉE



Aglaée is clearly more mature than the others, we imagine that it's due to her handicap that she's grown up quicker. Looks from other people don't bother her one bit, Aglaée feels good about herself and is not visibly bothered by any particular complex. Constantin's attempts to «protect» her from «immoral pupils» are clearly pointless and embarrassing since no one dares to annoy her. The character is taken from the short film **AGLAÉE** in which the excellent Géraldine Martineau already played the role.

## JOHANNA



Johanna is Swedish. She's a pretty, timid, sweet girl. Arriving at school, Johanna is as lost as Benoit. She struggles to integrate with the class as, as well as being quite reserved, there is the language barrier.

Naturally she becomes close with Benoit as they both need someone to talk to. Benoit can't resist her innocent charm, her grace which makes one think of a butterfly....

## CHARLES



Charles «the enemy» of the hero. Him and his gang of friends are loved by the whole class as they are good looking boys and know how to liven things up. Some teachers even let themselves be seduced and struggle to stay serious when faced with their cheek. They like to tease the pupils in the class but never with the intention of really hurting them. Their first victims are of course the weakest and the outsiders but Charles and his friends also tease each other. They aren't aware of the damage that they do to the others, the only thing they have in mind is to have a laugh.

# CAST

Benoît > REPHAEL GHRENASSIA  
Joshua > JOSHUA RACCAH  
Aglée > GÉRALDINE MARTINEAU  
Constantin > GUILLAUME CLOUD  
                  ROUSSEL  
Johanna > JOHANNA LINDSTEDT  
Greg > MAX BOUBLIL  
Charles > EYTHAN CHICHE  
Gabriel > GABRIEL NAHUM  
Ismael > ISMAËL MANDILE  
Arthur > ARTHUR GRÉGOIRE  
Astrid > ILÉANA COURBEY  
Yiling > YILING LUO  
Pauline > PAULINE LEBLOND

Samuel > SAMUEL JAMI  
Zélie > ZÉLIE POUYANNE  
Charles > CHARLES MADAR  
Nino > IDRIS ABDELMOULA DURUPT  
Jeni > JENI RADU  
Charles > CHARLES PICAVALS  
Astrid's friend > DIMITRI LAZAREFF  
Louise > LOUISE ANDRIER  
Sandra > PAOLA DUBOIS  
Émilie > ÉMILE DIEVAL  
Paul > PAUL SAULNIER  
Sixtine > SIXTINE DUPONT  
Thibault > THIBAUT CHABROL  
Eddy > EDDHY DUPONT



# CREW

Director RUDI ROSENBERG  
Screenplay and dialogue RUDI ROSENBERG  
Director of Photography NICOLAS LOIR  
Editor JULIE LENA  
Set designer SÉBASTIEN MEUNIER  
Original Music by JONATHAN MORALI  
Executive Producer ÉRIC ZAOUALI  
Assistant Director NATALIE ENGELSTEIN  
Casting AMÉLIE LAGRANGE  
Costume Director ELISE BOUQUET, REEM KUZAYLI  
Chief Sound Operator ARNAUD LAVALEIX  
Mixed by VINCENT ARNADI  
Chief Sound Engineer FRÉDÉRIC LE LOUËT  
Produced by MATHIAS RUBIN & ERIC JUHÉRIAN  
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