

Misericordia

(Miséricorde)

A film by Alain Guiraudie



103 mins / France/Spain/Portugal 2024 / In French / Ratio 1:2.35 / 5.1

Cannes Film Festival 2024

Winner Prix Louis-Delluc – Best French Film 2024

Opening date March 28th 2025

FOR ALL UK PRESS ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

Sue Porter/Lizzie Frith – Porter Frith Ltd

Tel. 07940 584066/07825 603705 porterfrith@hotmail.com

FOR ALL OTHER ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT

Robert Beeson – robert@newwavefilms.co.uk

Dena Blakeman – dena@newwavefilms.co.uk

info@newwavefilms.co.uk





SYNOPSIS

Jérémie returns to his hometown for the funeral of his former boss, the village baker. He decides to stay for a few days with Martine, the man's widow. A mysterious disappearance, a threatening neighbour and a priest with strange intentions make Jérémie's short stay in the village take an unexpected turn...

Alain Guiraudie is one of the most unique and transgressive voices in cinema, and this deepest French mixture of black comedy and melodrama, steeped in dark desires, again reveals his penchant for genre-hopping and narrative unpredictability.

Download photo set [here:](#)

Further information on our website [here:](#)

CAST

Jérémie
Martine
Vincent
The Priest
Walter
Jean-Pierre
Annie
Kilian
Policeman
Policewoman
And with

FÉLIX KYSYL
CATHERINE FROT
JEAN-BAPTISTE DURAND
JACQUES DEVELAY
DAVID AYALA
SERGE RICHARD
TATIANA SPIVAKOVA
ELIO LUNETTA
SÉBASTIEN FAGLAIN
SALOMÉ LOPES
PHILIPPE AUZUECH
LUIS SERRAT
SANDRA MARINHO DE OLIVEIRA

CREW

Written and directed by
Artistic direction
Cinematography
Production design
Costumes
Hair and make-up
Assistant Director
Casting
Sound

Editing
Original score
Line producer
Post-production supervisor
A film produced by
Associate producers
Coproducton companies

ALAIN GUIRAUDIE
LAURENT LUNETTA
CLAIRE MATHON
EMMANUELLE DUPLAY
KHADIJA ZEGGAI
MICHEL VAUTIER
FRANÇOIS LABARTHE
LAETITIA GOFFI, JULIE ALLIONE
VASCO PEDROSO, JORDI RIBAS,
JEANNE DELPLANCQ, BRANKO NESKO C.A.S
JEAN-CHRISTOPHE HYM
MARC VERDAGUER
ISABELLE TILLOU
DELPHINE PASSANT
CHARLES GILLIBERT
ROMAIN BLONDEAU, MÉLANIE BIESSY
CG CINÉMA, SCALA FILMS,
ARTE FRANCE CINÉMA, ANDERGRAUN FILMS,
ROSA FILMES
ARTE FRANCE, OCS, LES FILMS DU LOSANGE
CINÉMAGE 18 and LA BANQUE POSTALE IMAGE 17
CINÉCAP 7, CINEAXE 5
LE CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMÉE,
RÉGION OCCITANIE and DÉPARTEMENT DE L'AVEYRON,
ICEC – INSTITUT CATALÀ DE LES EMPRESES CULTURALS,
ICA – INSTITUTO DO CINEMA E DO AUDIOVISUAL

With the participation of
In association with
In association with
With the support of

France/Spain/Portugal 2024

103 minutes

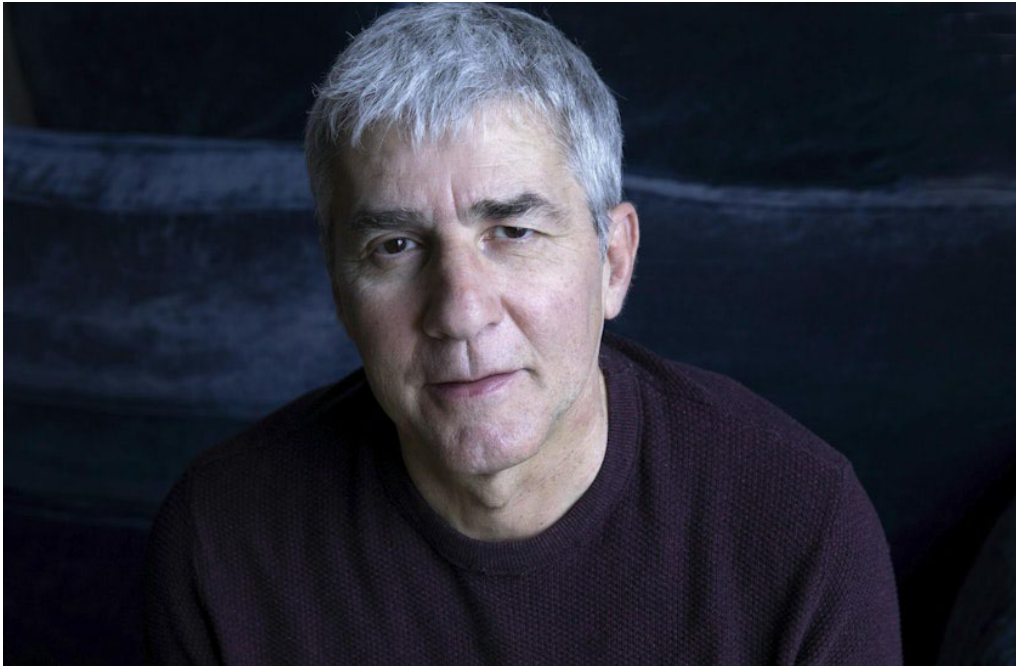
2.35 ratio, sound 5.1

©2024 CG Cinema / Scala Films / Arte France Cinéma / Andergraun Films / Rosa Filmes

ALAIN GUIRAUDIE

Born into a French farming family, Alain Guiraudie developed a passion for very young folk culture. He then wrote several unpublished novels at a very young age. In 1990, he directed his first short film, *HEROES NEVER DIE*.

In 2001 striving to represent the working class the tone of *THAT OLD DREAM THAT MOVES* was shot in a picaresque style. Presented in Cannes in the Directors' Fortnight section it went on to win the Prix Jean Vigo. Jean-Luc Godard said on this occasion that it was the Best Film at Cannes.



In 2013, *STRANGER BY THE LAKE* selected at the Cannes Film Festival in the Un Certain Regard section was a huge hit and received the 'Best Director' award and the 'Queer Palm'. In 2014, he published his first published novel *Ici commence la nuit* with Éditions POL. His latest film *MISERICORDIA* won the Louis-Delluc Prize for Best French Film of 2024 and was awarded by Cahiers du Cinéma for Best Film of the Year.

FILMOGRAPHY

Feature Films:

2024 - Misericordia
2021 - Nobody's Hero
2016 - Staying Vertical
2013 - Stranger by the Lake
2009 - The King of Escape
2005 - Time Has Come
2003 - No Rest for the Brave
2001 - That Old Dream that Moves
2000 - Sunshine for the Poor

Short Films:

1997 - La Force des choses
1994 - Straight Ahead Until Morning
1990 - Heroes Never Die



Interview with Alain Guiraudie

Perhaps, to begin with, let's talk about the title. What does the word 'Misericordia' (Mercy) mean to you? Is it the premise behind this new film?

The title came to me while I was writing this script. For me, mercy exceeds the question of forgiveness. It has to do with empathy, with understanding others beyond any morality. It's about reaching out to others. It's an old-fashioned word that we don't use much anymore, and it becomes the film well, its timelessness, and above one of the great characters in it, namely the priest.

This idea of 'mercy', of 'understanding others in spite of everything' permeates the whole story. Throughout the first part, we don't understand the relationships between the characters, or even your hero's intentions. Everything is left unsaid...

Here, even more than in my other films, I've worked hard to cultivate the mystery. I've tried to get the viewers to ask questions and take part in the story. It's the best way of avoiding boredom, and transcribing desire. Which, for me, is life's great mystery. You realise pretty quickly that the hero stays here because he wants someone. Even if the whole thing is shifting. He himself is the object of desire. And I'm also very interested in the confusion that this stranger and his unclear intentions can bring. I like the fact that we don't know who the villain is, and we don't really know which side we're on.



You also play on our imaginations and on what we expect from your cinema... This adds to the tension of the film...

I reckon that the viewers of my films expect a few things from me nowadays; they can see more or less where I'm going. I'm well aware that I'm almost always working on the same questions, the same motifs, and I play with that, with what's expected of me. But I also want to surprise, to surprise myself, to renew myself. Perhaps it was also time for desire not to end in sex. I don't know if anyone's said this before, but it seems to me that people

used to film fights to avoid filming sex. In a sense, I'm going in the opposite direction. In any case, here, desire isn't clear either, I'm not looking for resolutions, there's also a main character who imagines things, and so must the viewers, just as I have (and still do).

Whereas Nobody's Hero was a film about the times, very much in touch with our present anxieties, Misericordia looks to the past... A mysterious past whose consequences we can only begin to perceive...

Let's just say that things have happened, the protagonists have a shared past, but the film is here and now. Truth be told, I didn't think it necessary to film the slightest flashback. All that remains of this past is a photo album that Jérémie enjoys looking at. And like many of my films, it takes place between yesterday and today. The village in which we filmed has a timeless feel, built around its church and square, with its majestic presbytery, its old buildings and its very recent houses. With the bakery closed and the streets empty, you can't help feeling that the village was once a livelier place. The relationship between Jérémie and Vincent itself is quite unclear. You can imagine that they must have been great friends as teenagers, sharing secrets, but they've lost touch, and something has changed. They're not really back together like they used to be. This unease interests me. It creates a tension that can only build up towards something tragic.



Is the film also linked to your past?

Yes, I looked back a lot on my youth. I've put a lot of my teenage feelings into this film. The rivalry between boys, the underlying desire, the way we look at a friend's mother, and his father, of course. It's always the same: cinema allows me to mix my experience with the great history of cinema and the world. It's a way of universalising my personal story. It's also a way of learning and discovering. I'm fond of quoting Michel Schneider: 'All novels are stories in which we tell ourselves what we are, what we would like to be, and what we don't know we are.' The same goes for films.

While you usually film in summer or spring, *Misericordia* is really an autumn film. Why is that?

It's a twilight film. It begins with a funeral and ends in a cemetery at night. A man returns to the place of his adolescence, his early youth, and gradually finds himself imprisoned there. Autumn suits the film's themes. Autumn is melancholy. It offers beautiful light and colour. And it also brings its share of bad weather, fog, and wind. I was very interested in filming in November. But the colourful autumn (the red and yellow leaves) doesn't last long, three weeks or a month. Here, it was risky and fragile (when we were shooting, we hoped that the leaves would stick to the trees), and in a few days we went from summer to winter.

You made a thriller with *Stranger by the Lake*, but *Misericordia* is truly a film noir. What references did you have?

As far as film noirs are concerned, Hitchcock and Fritz Lang are always a reference for me. In any case, they're part of a common cultural background, so they're always there, at the back of my mind. I'm often referred to Chabrol, no doubt for his mix of darkness and comedy. But there's often this mocking, ironic side to him that I have a problem with. I'm very close to my characters. I put a part of myself into each of them. If I had to name one film-maker, oddly enough, the one who hung over this film was Bergman. It doesn't have much to do with film noir, but Bergman shows great mercy. A way of loving people no matter what, in spite of everything. His films are at once very controlled, very calm, and shot through with a real darkness. And by the way, have I really made a film noir? *Misericordia* doesn't seem to fit into that tradition. I was more interested in mixing genres. And essentially, I think this film owes more to Euripides than to Fritz Lang.

At the heart of every film noir is the question of the immoral and the amoral. In your opinion, is *Misericordia* a film without morals or, on the contrary, a film that deliberately goes against morals?

The films that interest me seek to shake things up; they observe and show the world from a unique angle. And here I've chosen to question or shake up a few established moral rules, particularly on the question of guilt, remorse, forgiveness, and of course, how far love of neighbour can (or should) go. These are questions that we think we've settled once and for all, but I don't think we have. Should murderers be put in prison? Are we really innocent of the world's disasters? And these questions (and turnarounds) are answered by the priest. In fact, he takes charge of my own questioning, my own reflection. *Misericordia* doesn't really provide any answers, but I hope that these questions and these troubles will resonate with the viewers.

How did you choose your lead actor, Félix Kysyl?

Stéphane Batut introduced me to him about ten years ago, at an audition for a film I didn't make. He was already a very interesting actor, and I kept his name in mind. I love his instinctive yet polished way of acting. There's something very contemporary about him.

Although he's a modern young man, in his behaviour, in his way of being, there's something timeless that reminds me of the cinema of the past. A classic side. I can't really explain it. Something about the way he looks. He reminds me of actors from the Golden Age of Hollywood. And above all he's very complex; I think that's what impressed me. about him back then. You'd think butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, and yet he can look like a killer. He can be both angel and demon.

And Jean-Baptiste Durand, whom we now know as a director?

I met Jean-Baptiste as a young actor from Montpellier, I didn't know he was a director, I hadn't seen *Junkyard Dog* (which hadn't been released yet). He is a character, a strong figure. He's not the kind of actor you often see in auditions. I knew straight away that he had a place in the film, not just because of the way he is but also because of the simplicity of his acting. In fact, it wasn't until quite late that he knew he would be playing Vincent. He and Félix work well together as best friends and sworn enemies.

Opposite them is Catherine Frot. After Noémie Lvovsky in *Nobody's Hero*, you are welcoming a very well-known face from French cinema into your world. As someone who usually favours new faces, how did this encounter come about?

Catherine Frot is really a very popular actress. In both senses of the word: everyone knows her, and she can blend into popular worlds. She doesn't stand out. I never write with actors in mind, and it's usually at casting that the trouble starts for me. That's when I have to give a body, a voice to these characters I have in mind in a very vague form. I quickly thought of Catherine Frot to play Martine, mainly because of her ingenuousness, her childlike quality. But I hesitated to ask her, because I'm always afraid that with such a well-known actress, whom we've seen in so many roles, it's hard to believe in a new character. I think I'd find it hard to believe myself. But as soon as I took the plunge and met Catherine, everything went swimmingly well. We rehearsed and Catherine fit right into the world of the film. And very quickly I believed in Martine.

It's always said that great film noirs are also great romantic films. Would you say that *Misericordia* is a film about love?

At first glance, I'd say yes. There's a real love story underlying the whole film. But there are hidden ones as well: Jérémie's love for the dead man, and another one I won't reveal here, as it would spoil the film too much. But it's really about desire. Our hero is at the centre of this circulation of desire, and little by little he finds himself a prisoner of this village.