



Presents



**BETTY BLUE: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT
(37°2 le matin)**

A Film by Jean-Jacques Beineix

Starring

Jean-Hugues Anglade • Béatrice Dalle

France 1991

With English Subtitles

Running Time: 185 minutes

Aspect Ratio: 35mm 1.66

Sound: Mono

Not Rated

PUBLICITY CONTACT

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HIGHLIGHTS

“Extraordinary and extraordinarily sensual...Beineix’s film, with its cascading intimation of craziness and doom, is a work of great comedy, great sadness, great beauty and great audacity.”
– Joe Baltake, INSIDE

“A masterpiece...one of the purest, most powerful love stories to appear on screen...a master storyteller”. – Laurie Halpern Smith, Movieline

“One of the best French films of the 80s.”
– BBC, Channel 4

“A sexually explicit tale of a crazy love.” – San Francisco Chronicle

“Feverish tale of amour fou...Dalle, a model, makes a moving debut as the desperate baby-doll who fails to mold reality to her own conceptions of happiness.” – Variety

“To love ‘Betty Blue’ is to love a bomb that can go off, blowing itself up, at any moment.”
– Jerry Tallmer, New York Post

“A muse as drawn by Picasso perhaps, impudent, full-lipped, infinitely delectable.”
– Sheila Benson, Los Angeles Times

“An extraordinarily sensual movie.” – Paul Attanasio, Washington Post

“Perhaps the biggest reason for Betty Blue's cult success is that it was nearly an entire generation's first experience with cinematic sex. It was so seductively forbidden for anyone who was a teenager in the 1980s..'Betty Blue’ is imprinted on the minds of millions of men as the cinematic equivalent of losing their virginity.” Sarah Chauncey, Reel.com

“‘Betty Blue’ is a film to make you laugh, get you excited, move you to anger and leave you in a melancholy that sinks to the bottom of your soul. In short, it does what finest cinema should do, ferment in your intellect while engaging your emotions.” – Bruce Kirkland, The Toronto Sun

AWARDS:

- ❖ Nominated - Academy Awards USA 1986 - Best Foreign Language Film
- ❖ Nominated – Golden Globe – Best Foreign Language Film
- ❖ Nominated - BAFTA - Best Foreign Language Film
- ❖ Winner – Best Foreign Film – Boston Society of Film Critics
- ❖ Winner - Best Director & Best Actress -18th Seattle International Film Festival (Golden Space Needle Awards)
- ❖ 4 wins at at Montréal World Film Festival :
- ❖ Best Film / Most Popular Film / Grand Prize of the Americas / Jury Prize
- ❖ 9 Nominations at the Césars :
- ❖ Best Film / Best Director / Best Actor / Best Actress / Best Supporting actor / Best Supporting Actress / Best Music / Best Editing / Best Poster
- ❖ 2 wins at Paris :
Prize of Youth / George de Beauregard Prize for Best Producer

SYNOPSIS

A shocking and offbeat story of two French lovers, Zorg (Jean-Hugues Anglade) and Betty (Béatrice Dalle), who fall into a deeply erotic and all-encompassing relationship. Zorg is a simple repairman in his mid-thirties who lives a relatively dull life in a remote, weathered shack until he meets Betty, a sexy, mercurial younger woman who challenges his way of thinking and forces him to change his life. When Betty and Zorg are not having wild and uninhibited sex (and joyously traipsing around naked), Zorg is writing his novel, an unpublished masterwork that Betty discovers and vehemently champions. Betty, prone to violent fits of passionate rage, attacks Zorg's boss and burns their shack down, leaving Zorg no choice but to join her on a series of spirited adventures. They move in with Betty's best friend and her boyfriend and for a brief time live a happy bohemian lifestyle, wild and crazy in love. But as the film progresses, Betty's mental illness becomes more apparent, she lives in a fitful manic world of passionate highs and lows while Zorg desperately attempts to coddle and comfort her. Finally, the lovers start over in a dreamy rural town, hoping to live a normal life, but Betty's fantasy world encroaches on her reality as she slowly spirals out of control in this intense story of love and lust, based on the novel by Philippe Djian.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Betty Blue is quintessential French cinema material, an uninhibited and tumultuous story of an obsessive relationship that descends into madness. When it premiered in 1986, the film gained notoriety for its full-frontal nudity and explicit sex. With audience members questioning if the sex scenes were simulated or not, the word-of-mouth buzz helped drive it to box-office success. Based on a novel by Philippe Djian, it has become a cult classic for its mercurial characters, bohemian sexuality and descent into *l'amour fou*. *Betty Blue: The Director's Cut*, never screened in US theatres, features an additional hour of footage.

It begins at the seashore, where handyman Zorg (Jean-Hugues Anglade) and the effervescent Betty (Béatrice Dalle) are in the throes of a passionate one-week affair. Betty, a free-spirit whose sense of abandon tips over into the manic, moves into Zorg's rundown beach shack at a decaying seaside resort and promptly creates a bit of havoc with his employer. Zorg is content to spend his days painting beach shacks, drinking Tequila and fondling Betty's bottom until she becomes fed up with their inert situation and while throwing a tantrum and tossing Zorg's possessions, she discovers his manuscript and decides it must be published. Betty then calmly burns down their place, and the two go into Paris to live with her friend Lisa (Consuelo De Haviland) and her lover. While Betty types up Zorg's writings, the two live passionately in love and share their *joie-de-vivre* with their friends, but Betty's ups start to come down with increasing ferocity.

After an altercation, the two lovers decamp from Paris to the South of France and find themselves embroiled in spirited adventures, with Betty's mental state held in check for a time. Things seem to be heading towards some normalcy when Betty discovers she may be pregnant. When the test results arrive, it sends Betty into a dark, destructive depression and Zorg to desperate measures.

A mesmerizing debut by Dalle, who was discovered on a magazine cover by Beineix, has left a generation of men (and perhaps women) fantasizing over crazy love. Anglade's performance as a man who will go to the end of the earth for his love is heroic. The lush cinematography by Jean-Francois Robin is enhanced by a perfectly understated score by Gabriel Yared and a signature haunting piano melody.

Betty Blue: The Director's Cut features an additional hour of footage from the version shown previously in US theaters. The characters of Zorg and Betty are more fully realized, with the leads' performances and the voluptuous, early days of their relationship fleshed out in more detail. Betty's crossover from obsessive passion to full-on emotional breakdown is more fully depicted and this version gives more screen time to the secondary characters who add a sense celebration and wild abandon with plenty of extremely funny moments along the way. A darker and even more memorable ride.

INTRODUCING BETTY BLUE:

Original synopsis written by Jean-Jacques Beineix

We met a week ago, we fuck every night, they forecast storms for tonight.

At 35 years old, one starts to have a certain experience of life...

One appreciates to get breath back. That's the kind of thought a guy a little bit coward, back from a lot of things like Zorg can have, when he is about to swallow a spoonful of chili and it's always then, a girl like Betty chooses to turn up with her bags, her purple Skai's heart and not even a train ticket...

Then Zorg, the guy, stands up, takes the bags and naturally, puts them down on the bed and when turning back, Betty, the girl, smiles Madonna-like, putting her hands together, and he thinks, while looking at her nice thighs, that there are not so many girls who can wear such a small apron in such a carefree way...

A carousel goes round on the beach, Zorg and Betty drink Tequila under the veranda, the wind carries away pieces of news coming from the North of France. She thinks that fortune has given them an appointment somewhere and that she wants them to stay together if possible. But, he just would like to kiss her and keep on caressing her bottom till the end of the night, if possible...and it's possible.

On condition to repaint in pink a whole city, on condition to get humiliated by bastards you'd better shoot down, even if you are a great writer and that you don't care about being published...

But, on a beautiful night, the lovely Betty, who can turn herself into a fury by a hint, discovers a pile of little black notebooks fulfilled with writings and here is the great writer unmasked...

It's the kind of dangerous situation with a girl like Betty especially if she starts to think that you are the greatest writer of your generation and gets into her head to make your writings published... she doesn't need much more to burn down the bungalow and to declare with an ingenuous voice : "So, are you coming?"

Then, even if he knows that he's got nothing to loose, nothing to win and that for the most, nothing can be changed, the guy looks at the sea for the last time and takes the road with the girl because he is in love with her...

For her, he'll cook pizzas, he'll sell pianos, he'll wonder if fathers are the last adventurers of modern times, he'll buy a house and the fields around... and till the sunset, he'll pretend to believe in happiness, just because he loves her and being in love with a girl like Betty, it's watching her lives until madness...

The Meaning of the title - '37°2 le matin'

- 37°2 (Celsius) is the temperature of the body when it wakes up in the morning.

About *Betty Blue: The Director's Cut*

- Never shown before in US theatres. (The Director's Cut was distributed in 1991 by Columbia through Home Entertainment channels in the US)
- Includes an additional hour of footage
- Website created for the 20th anniversary of the film (in French) <http://www.372-ledvd.com>

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

A rabid movie fan when he was young, Jean-Jacques Beineix first studied medicine before entering the movie business. During the seventies, as an assistant director, he worked with Claude Berri, René Clément, Claude Zidi and even Jerry Lewis. But, like many assistants, Beineix' dream was to direct. His first effort was in 1977 with the short 'Le Chien de Monsieur Michel' ('Mr. Michel's Dog'). A promising debut, it earned a César nomination for best short film.

In 1981, he directed his first feature 'Diva', a stylish thriller based on a book by Delacorta. When it came out, 'Diva' was not supported by French critics, but slowly the film gained momentum due to good word of mouth and positive reactions in various festivals like Moscow and Toronto. Ultimately, the film became a great success internationally, winning four Césars.

His next film, 'La Lune dans le caniveau' ('The Moon in The Gutter'), was an adaptation of a David Goodis novel, more radical than 'Diva' in its deliberate artificiality. It premiered at Cannes in 1983.

Beineix came back in 1986 with '37°2 le matin' ('Betty Blue'), based on a Philippe Djian novel. Despite mixed reviews, the film was another international hit, won the top prize at Montréal festival, and was nominated for best foreign film at both the Oscars and Golden Globes. It also earned 9 César nominations including best film and best director.

In 1989, Beineix directed 'Roselyne et les lions' ("Roselyn and the Lions") (1989) followed in 1992, by 'IP5,' which was known for being French actor Yves Montand's last role.

Beineix then resurfaced where he was least expected with social documentaries. He did a film about children in Romania; one on obsession, 'Otaku,' shot in Japan; and a piece for television on the French Elle editor, Jean-Dominique Bauby, who suffered a stroke that resulted in locked-in syndrome, 'Assigné à résidence'.

In 2001, he returned to fiction with 'Mortel Transfert' (Mortal Transfer), a psycho-thriller based on a Jean-Pierre Gattégno novel. In 2002, Beineix drew strong ratings with the made-for-TV documentary 'Loft paradoxe', an attempt to analyze the success of reality show 'Loft Story'.

With his intense focus on the power of images, Beineix paved the way for directors like Luc Besson, Leos Carax and Jean-Pierre Jeunet. A self-proclaimed misanthropist who never hid his contempt for producers and was often deemed excessive and irascible, he will go down in history as a director who raised controversy not for the subjects he tackled but for his stylistic approach. With 'Diva' and '37°2 le matin', he directed two seminal French films of the eighties that engaged a worldwide audience.

Jean-Jacques Beineix created his own production company in 1984, [Cargo Films](#), in order to keep artistic independence. The company produces feature films and documentaries on a wide variety of themes from science to art, to women's rights to social problems. Several films have been made in partnership with national scientific organization such as CNES and CNRS.

In 2006 he published the first volume of his autobiography, *Les Chantiers de la gloire* published in French only. This title clearly alludes to the French title of Stanley Kubrick's film, 'Les Sentiers de la gloire' ([Paths of Glory](#)). Additionally, Beineix, is a painter, with several works available to view on his website: <http://www.cargofilms.com/fr/peinture/index.php>.

MAIN CAST

'Betty' - Béatrice Dalle

Rebellious. Passionate. Gifted. Beautiful. Béatrice Dalle could be a mix of some artist from many centuries ago and a rock star. Discovered in *Betty Blue*, Dalle has become a sex symbol and a respected performer. Known for her problems with justice, her relationships with rapper Joey Starr and her explicit talking, Béatrice Dalle is anyway starring in many independent works of art such as *Belle histoire, La* (The Beautiful story) by Claude Lelouch, *À la folie* ("Six days, six nights") alongside Anne Parillaud, *Seventeen Times Cecile Cassard* ("17 times Cecile Cassard") with Romain Duris or *Trouble Every Day* with Vincent Gallo.

'Zorg' - Jean-Hugues Anglade

Sensual, ambiguous, ultra sensitive French performer Jean-Hugues Anglade always had a reputation of intense and passionate actor. Any role, any language, Anglade seems to be able to do anything. From appearing integrally naked alongside Béatrice Dalle in "37.2 degrees in the morning", to playing an homosexual role in "The wounded man", from portraying the king of France in "Queen Margot", to playing a Canadian cop alongside Angelina Jolie and Ethan Hawke in "Taking lives", from playing Anne Parillaud's lover in "Nikita", to showing the 40-years-old-men crisis. Now Anglade is an established actor, a respected artist and man, who can come over the drama of his childhood.

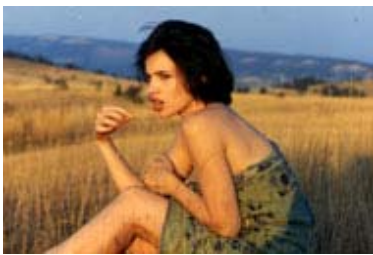
FULL CAST

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Betty | Béatrice Dalle |
| Zorg | Jean-Hugues Anglade |
| Lisa | Consuelo de Haviland |
| Eddy | Gérard Darmon |
| Annie | Clémentine Célerié |
| Bob | Jacques Mathou |
| Owner | Claude Confortes |
| Gynéco éditeur | Philippe LAudenbach |
| Richard- policeman | Vincent Lindon |
| Old policeman | Raoul Billeray |
| Doctor | Claude Aaufaure |
| Old Georges | André Julien |
| Maria | Nathalie Dalya |
| Mario | Louis Bellanti |
| Tenant 2 | Bernard Robin |
| Little Nicolas | Nicolas Jalowyj |

CREDITS

Gaumont presents a Constellation / [Cargo Films](#) co-production

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Director | Jean-Jacques Beineix |
| Producers | Claudie Ossard |
| | Jean-Jacques Beineix |
| Adaptation | Jean-Jacques Beineix <i>(from the novel by Philippe Djian – Ed. B. Barrault)</i> |
| Original Soundtrack | Gabriel Yared <i>(© Cargo Films (p) Yad Music)</i> |
| Cinematographer | Jean-François Robin |
| Sound | Pierre Befve |
| Set Designer | Carlos Conti |
| Editor | Monique Prim |



More information at: http://www.cinemalibrestudio.com/betty_blue_directors_cut.html

Beineix Blue

by Marcia Pally

Jean-Jacques Beineix, director of *Diva* and this year's French entry to the Oscars, *Betty Blue*, is on the phone with a journalist who couldn't make it to interview him in person because he couldn't find a taxi. The subject of the talk is "Life in America." It's a bowl of cherries, Beineix tells the reporter who can't be bothered with plebe transportation. Never been grander. Never been richer. "What do I think about American cars?" Beineix doesn't miss a beat. "It's stupid to buy a car that goes 140 mph to drive 35 mph. What? I have a car that goes 140 mph, but," straining to keep his voice down, "I drive it that fast in France."

He also climbs mountains and made it up the Matterhorn. He sails his 35-foot boat in the Atlantic. The storm that followed him to the Azores and blew him to Portugal didn't stop him from going out again. But, Beineix concedes, he had a "boring childhood." He studied philosophy in college and got highest scores in the baccalaureate exam, except in math, where he got a zero. "Since I was so good in math, I decided to become a doctor." He studied medicine for a year but, bored, took a job in TV ostensibly to race around in production vehicles.

Now 40, Beineix apprenticed as an assistant director on a dozen or so films by Rene Clement, by both Jean-Louis and Nadine Trintignant, Claude Berri, and by Claude Zidi. He worked with Jerry Lewis on *The Day the Clown Cried* and with Moshe Mizrahi on *Madame Rosa*. Beineix shot his first short, "Mr. Michels' Dog," in 1977. It was nominated for a Caesar. Two years and one more AD job later, producer Irene Silberman asked him to write and direct an adaptation of Delacorta's *roman noir*, *Diva*. That film claimed four Caesars.

Beineix still isn't sure he belongs. Small and boyish, he squirms around on his palmy hotel couch in a black T-shirt, black pants, and a scraggly week-old beard that fails to give him



Beatrice Dalle.

authority. "I'm not part of this business," he shrugs. "I'm between cultures—not quite bourgeois, not a worker. I'm part adventurer but too shy to be a real one. I've been on the ocean, mountains, motorcycles, horseback. But in a strange city I'm afraid to go out because I don't know where I'm going."

Beineix asks me what I'm wearing to a reception later in the evening. "I'm asking because I want to know how I should dress. I like to be as visible as possible, but I don't want to be stared at with hostility. Unless I'm with a group of friends and we're all being crazy together, I'm a conformist." Beineix smiles, shrugs, pouts, and considers the ceiling.

"I've traveled, met people, had lots of women. But I haven't been able to hold on to one. I have no children. I think I would like a child, but I know after a year or two I will move, go away. My only home is film, but this is not a roof; it is fights with bad businessmen and decadent capitalists who want profit without risk.

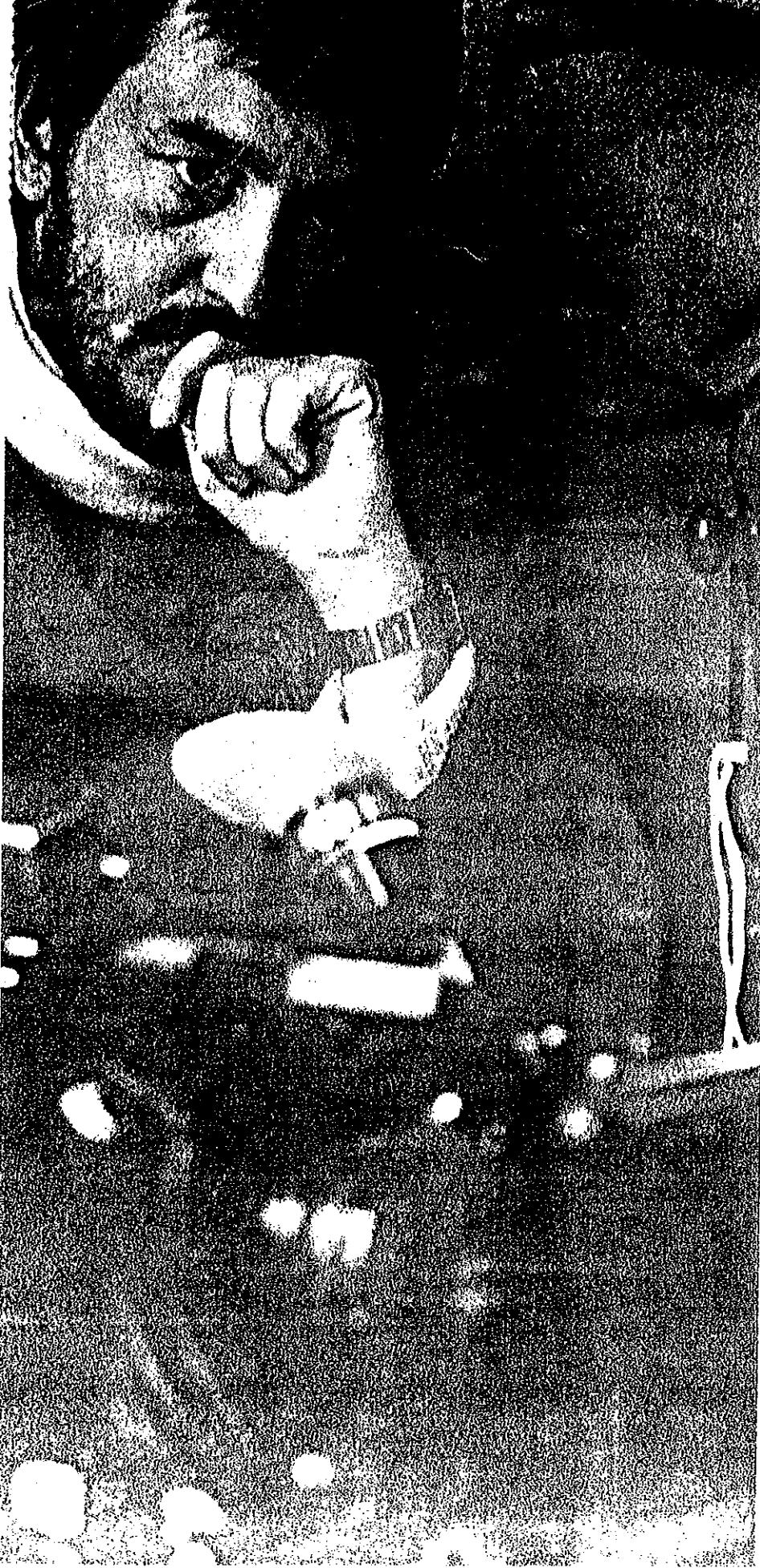
"I have been a lot of things, but I'm

still looking for a little harmony. There are moments on the boat when I am in perfect balance with the waves. I steer through them with just two fingers on the wheel. I can sit there, riding, for 17 hours. Sometimes the camera, after an extraordinary amount of work and technique, finds the smile of a woman in just a certain way, and I see this harmony. For a day it helps me accept my fears that I will age or become stupid and pretend that I know everything and stifle the next generation. I don't ever want to do that. That's why I have to keep climbing. I have to put everything at stake every time. But it's hard. This is the great contradiction: do I keep pushing, driving myself for a glimpse of those moments? There are so few of them."

Maybe. But it's the only game in town. The rest is complacency. Beineix finds his peace making movies that run wild. While the rest of his countrymen film the ennui and charms of the bourgeoisie, Beineix looks for loose screws. His characters bound on springs that are about to pop and vault into the corners of their obsessions.

In *Diva*, a young mailman (Frederic Andrei) lusts after an opera singer who refuses to record her performances. He dreams of stealing her voice, and for months he plots to pirate a tape—his *pianissimo* pornography. Beineix shot *Diva* in neon-bright primary colors that float in a velvety black no man's land. One scene flies off the tangent of another, and the story careens with the abandon of our hero's delivery truck. The critics hailed it as a stylistic splash. In his second film, *Moon in the Gutter* (based on the novel by David Goodis), the images are just as smashing and the plot as rude. The film takes you for a ride through a port city slum where a stevedore (Gerard Depardieu) dreams of a pristine woman (Natassia Kinski) and the clean, cool life of the rich. The critics panned it as ponderous.

Adapted from Philippe Dijan's 37° 2 *Le Matin*, *Betty Blue*, in Beineix's most vivid work to date, tells of a young man named Zorg (Jean-Hugues Anglade) who has run out of steam.



He meets up with an unruly siren, Betty (Beatrice Dalle), and falls in love. Without manners, inhibitions, or fear of failure, she sets his life spinning. She makes him believe in himself—and in his novel. But the force that propels her is all faith and desire. Like the genius that spurs both art and madness, it cannot accept the world. Betty goes very crazy. The critics split. Some were transported by Beineix's mad Magdalene; others yawned.

Beineix's theme repeats itself: In each film, an ordinary fellow meets his muse, compelling and uncompromising as air. She literally brings him life. In *Betty*, however, she also brings her own point of view. Unlike the Aphrodites of *Diva* and *Gutter*, Betty is flesh and blood, opinionated, stubborn, and available. And unlike the heroes of *Diva* and *Gutter*, Zorg achieves his dreams. Despite Beineix's doubts about belonging in the business, his success is showing.

Beineix both is his uncompromising Betty—as wild and driving—and wants to have one all his own. But he'd also like a reprieve from her insistent inspiration. He wants both muse and mother, or mother of his child—which comes to the same thing. Unfortunately for him, divas rarely settle down.

"The rich have the means to protect themselves," Beineix says, explaining his interest in the little guy who reaches beyond his grasp. "I prefer *les gens populaires*. They are closer to their own weaknesses and their own grandeur." *Gutter*, he continues, is about "fake" or the false promises of advertising and movies. *Diva* is about the chimera of theater.

"In *Betty* I tried to escape from 'fake' and look at how people can really inspire each other, especially men and women. I wanted to talk about passion and sexuality, about all the things men and women share. And about the details that suddenly make life full of beauty and intensity. I'm bored with archetypes and speeches and long descriptions of love. I leave this bullshit for the soap operas. I like the quality of the unsaid, like the lovers' argument in *Betty* that is reconciled by a few notes on the piano."

Not only are the relationships in *Betty* more down to earth than in his earlier work, the storyline is more continuous and traditional.

"I can't commit suicide every time

Jean-Jacques Beineix.

There are four rules: dramatize every move you make; advertize every move; make every success seem twice as big as it is; and make every failure work for you.

I make a movie. Even if I think of myself as subversive or rebellious, I know I have to give the audience a chance to understand what I do. Young directors sometimes go too far. It's a quality of youth and also the limitation. I think *Gutter* is a masterpiece, but it's also pretentious. I thought the images would be strong enough to mesmerize audiences. They weren't.

"The critics were very good to remind me that there are rules. For ten years working in film I learned about those rules. And when I finally overcame the guilt of not following them, they wanted to stop me. They were successful. In *Betty* I'm trying to be effective but more pragmatic. So I reinforced the structure, the chronology."

Is Betty a compromise?

"Yes. But a good one because the spirit is intact. . . . I'm still attacked by committees for the defense of the old regime who claim my work is empty, all surface images, and that I don't consider dramaturgy or the actors. But they are old fashioned. They are like the academies of the 19th-century dealing with Impressionism. They think cinema should serve reality in a literal sense. They ask where the message is, but they don't see that the image is the message. They don't understand the theories of Toffler or McLuhan, which are not new. They don't see that we can use reality and give it another dimension in film. The image that begins with reality is open. We play with it.

"There's a gap between the audience and some critics. There are a few who try to revise their codes, but others use cinema to promote themselves and their ethical patterns. They cheat themselves and the audience. When the writer from *Vanity Fair* says *Betty Blue* has 'fruit-salad brains' or that the film is pointless except for the sex, it means he's interested not only in a traditional treatment of narrative but in conservative messages and morals.

"These critics won't succeed. It is a political fight. People ask me why I bother to respond to them: because they affect not only me but other artists who try to work with form and images in

new ways. It's like fighting the conservative parties. . . . I am screaming, no? You will lose patience with me. Sometimes I am much worse, but the pressure is bad now because *Betty* is successful and everybody wants me to make a film for them—studios, agents, actors. And not only in France; in America, also. 'They all want to sign me up and I want to resist them,'" he says, contradicting reports that he's eager to make a film in Hollywood, as well as his own attraction to the idea. "I want to choose the right script, and I have to be my own producer.

"I ask myself if I should make the big American picture. Am I forcing myself into more fights with a new bureaucracy and a new language? And here I don't have the same fences, the same protections as in France. I don't know anyone. There is so much anxiety about making a film; to add more is dangerous. I don't want another failure. I can't afford another personal failure.

"The phone never stops, and everyone is pushing. And I have to play games with all of them."

Like his 15th-century mentor, Louis XI, Beineix is a consummate strategist. When bad reviews come in, he gets angry and plots out the next step. When good reviews come in, he plots out the next step. He explains to me what interests him about playing film politics—pitting agents against studios and dancing with the press.

"There are four rules: dramatize every move you make; advertize every move; make every success seem twice as big as it is; and make every failure work for you. I love these games. It is all such bullshit."

It turns you on?

"On one level. But I also hate it. I do it to avoid the void. I hate that it is so hard to make films. I also despair.

"I have fantasies about returning to commercial films. There I am a director for hire. You want to make a film about chocolate or cars? No problem. I ask for a lot of money. I am cold, mercenary. Commercial directing improves your technique. It's quick, exciting, and over. It's a way to keep moving and not see that you are aging."

A call comes in from France. Beineix

rails about film deals in the U.S. "Already there are rumors in Europe," he growls, "that I am in exile in America and am making a big movie here." I suggest it fits the loner image he's been painting.

"Perhaps this image is not the result only of choice. Perhaps it is because I can't do any better. I don't feel I fit in with the standard of French culture. The French lack challenge, ambition. They have pretensions but no pragmatism. So I try to challenge. We have to improve the rules all the time. But this attempt at subversion would be directed at America if I lived here. I try to keep being alien."

Sounds seductive. What's this problem with women you mentioned before?

"I have never been with one more than two years. I'm reckless and restless. I am always looking for something new, for something else. But maybe it's just that my process of maturation is slow. Maybe I need to change pace."

Out of the blue, Beineix says, "Excuse me. May I ask you if you are a dancer?" He mumbles something about long necks and the Russian school. "I was with a dancer who studied in Russia. We were together for two years, but I left at the end of *Betty*. You don't like the question. But don't be angry. It's just that I can see you. You are hiding behind your scarf."

I don't have to be angry. Print is my revenge.

"I don't think you'll take your revenge this way."

Divas, Bettys, and ballerinas. . . .

Beatrice Dalle, dubbed "the new Bardot" by Parisian tastemakers, has doe eyes, black hair, and the most curvaceous body I've seen since Twiggy flattened tits 'n' ass. Her most lubricious feature is her sizable mouth, which, a colleague informed me, drives men mad thinking about what it could do. Brought up in Le Mans, Dalle bolted to Paris, where she took up the punk scene around Les Halles. A photographer spotted her hanging around Place de la Republique, took a few shots, and landed her on the cover of *Photo Revue*. Helmut Newton grabbed her for a

photo spread in *Vanity Fair*, and Beineix signed her on as Betty.

"She imposes herself," he has told a thousand reporters. "You cannot invent a character like that." But not all viewers are as impressed. One man told me her mouth looks like the grill of a Pontiac. More problematic is Dalle's character. Her temper tantrums are a self-indulgent pain in the ass.

What's the appeal for Zorg?

"He loves her." Beineix seems surprised by the question. "She gives him what he needs. She says what he deserves; she kicks his ass. She gives him back the passion he forgot."

Would you stay with her?

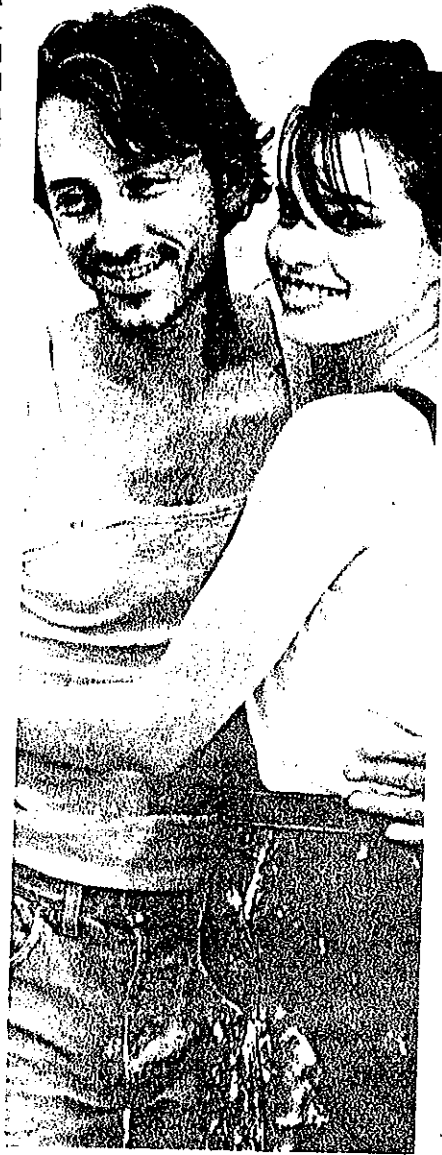
"Would you stay with General Patton? But it is still an interesting picture. If people are asking themselves, 'Would I stay with her?' the film is provoking them. But Beatrice gets all the attention. No one notices Anglade."

Jean-Hughes Anglade has a chiseled body and naive eyes. They disarm and then arouse, apparently without design. Anglade played the lead in Patrice Chereau's *The Wounded Man*, the roller in *Subway*, and Zorg in *Betty Blue*. In my book, he and Gerard Darmon (as Eddie, the owner of a pizza parlor and pal to our doomed duo) steal the picture.

"Anglade acts with great technique. It is sizzled, precise, elegant. He never overdoes it. It is a very high level of work. But in this business, people don't talk about technique. They don't understand the difference between text and context, subject and treatment, or between what is created by the script, the camerawork, and the acting."

Perhaps not, but they do notice male nudity. Much of the attention Anglade has purloined from Dalle can be blamed on his frontal frankness.

"I felt ashamed of the way women are treated in movies," Beineix explains. "This doesn't mean I don't like the bodies of women and looking at the bodies of women. I do very much. But if the woman is nude, the man must be nude, too. If he is not, then it means there is something shameful about men's bodies or there is something shameful about being nude. Neither is good. On one hand, if nudity is shameful and men show women nude, there's a problem between men and women. That's bad for relations between men and women and that ends up being bad for me. On the other hand, if men are ashamed of



With Jean-Hughes Anglade.

their bodies, how can they deal with the body of the other? How can they be sexual?

"So there is a lot of nudity in *Betty*. Perhaps I was relieving some personal inhibitions. I know there are some people who say I shouldn't do that in public. But I think there are some others who are a little like me, so I relieve their fears, too.

"I don't support censorship of any kind, but I wonder how people can criticize nudity in film and not violence. You can put brains on the floor, cut throats, and show rapes, but you get an X because of nudity. There are sex scenes in *Betty* [jettisoning shame at the outset, it opens with a long, slow zoom into Betty and Zorg fuck-

ing], but these are love scenes. They are even in the missionary position.

"I didn't get any official trouble about them, but everyone asks me about the sex. In France, *Betty* is rated 'No one under 13'; in England, 'No one under 18.' It has no rating here because it's an independent. I think the studios didn't pick *Betty* up so that they didn't have to put it through the [MPAA] board and get an X."

While Anglade is an accomplished actor, Dalle is new to the field. Beineix used beginners in *Diva* and then switched to stars in *Gutter*.

"It's interesting how people emphasize this difference. Implicitly it says that all you noticed in *Gutter* was Kinski and Depardieu. But Victoria Abril was fabulous; the man who played the brother should've gotten an award. The black woman is a singer who speaks no French and memorized every line by heart. The critics go immediately to the 'knowns' because it's easier to talk about them."

In *Gutter*, Abril has one of the sexiest scenes in recent cinema. In a run-down yard filled with stripped cars and trash, she rocks on a home-made swing. At the crest of each arc, her legs sweep near a battered truck. Sullenly she kicks it, then falls away. Again and again.

"I prefer to work with unknowns and beginners, but I've made only three films. When I've made 20, I'll know better what I like. I'm afraid to work with established actors because they know too many things. They'll teach me too many things. I'm afraid they'll control the picture and control me. It's better if they stay with their security about what they know about their business. I need to work with people who will put their image at stake. Natassia took risks and works hard. If you look at Depardieu's performance in *Gutter*, you'll see he did something there that he never did before. I wish him never to be worse than he was in this film."

Depardieu wasn't happy working with Beineix and, when *Gutter* opened, spared no public occasion from venting his dissatisfaction.

"To discover new people," Beineix says, "is the interesting part of this job."

I never got an answer to my question. Would you stay with Betty?

"I have stayed with much worse." ⊕