



Peccadillo Pictures Presents
A film by Sophie Laloy



Starring Isild Le Besco (*Girls Can't Swim, Roberto Succo, The Good Heart*),
Judith Davis (*Réfractaire*), Johan Libéreau (*The Witnesses*),
Edith Scob (*Summer Hours, Eyes Without a Face*)

DVD Release Date: March 29th 2010 Running Time: 96 mins Cert: TBC Extras: Making Of

Moving away from her family is a big step for young Marie. Shy, inexperienced in life and immature, she nonetheless embraces this exciting opportunity to fine-tune her piano skills at the prestigious Conservatoire in Lyon. She moves into the apartment of childhood friend Emma, a mysterious young woman who until now has buried herself in a time-consuming medicine degree. The arrival of the chipper Marie is a breath of fresh air for reclusive Emma, and Marie too is excited to rekindle their friendship. However both women have changed vastly since their younger years, and what was once an intimate bond soon develops into something much more intense. Emma fascinates, dominates and devastates Marie, who struggles between her desire for Emma and the urge to escape. With this draining obsession having an adverse effect on her piano recitals, Marie decides to put an end to Emma's advances. But Emma won't give her up without a fight...

Highly Strung combines heady passions of unrequited adolescent love with sinister overtones of jealousy, lust and envy, to the tune of classical symphonies from Mozart, Ravel, Bach and Chopin.



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SOPHIE LALOY (Director)

The film follows story of Marie, a young pianist who goes to the music conservatory of Lyon, and to save money she shares a flat with a friend she hasn't seen since her childhood. The film tells the story between these two young women who live together for a year. At first, Marie is fascinated and very impressed by her flatmate, who little by little starts putting pressure on her and becomes very controlling and possessive, and will start inhibiting her private life. For this film, I was inspired by a rather complicated experience I had with a flatmate during my studies at the music conservatory in Lyon.

I wanted to make a sensual story, to film the skin, the feet, the hands, the hair. Sexuality is completely linked to this story. For Marie, the desire to discover sex is very strong, paired with the fact that it is prohibited by Emma. Thusly, the pair interact like communicating vessels. Emma sees a raw sexuality in Marie, and once influenced, starts to see her as an object of desire. Marie accepts this sexual relationship without really realising it. Her power in relation to Emma is having sexual relationships outside Emma's boundaries. and thus she has the power to hurt.



JUDITH DAVIS (Marie)

Marie is a very young woman who is just growing out of being a teenager, and who leaves her family for the first time to live in a big city. She learns some of life's difficulties via the ambiguous, oppressing and strongly passionate relationship with her flatmate. Marie, as a twenty year old woman, doesn't want to leave her childhood, her adolescence, her family, but she must. I think people experience transitions at all ages, but leaving the teenage years, that's a very particular time. That mix of indecisiveness, immaturity, the burgeoning femininity and the determination that you see in Marie, are very true to that age. I don't know if you still experience some of those things at forty. I hope not!

Playing Marie was very interesting for me as I also play the piano so

when you are an actor it's great to be able to share something with the character you are playing. It creates a bond between you and the character, and so I was able to work on the songs before the film started shooting. The songs in this film are very significant, and were very well chosen. They are musical metaphors from the beginning to the end of the film, and express very precisely every one the emotions Marie is going through. For example, there is the song 'Pavane' by Ravel, that Marie knows how to play from the start that symbolises all of Marie's contrasts. It's a song that seems very simple but is actually very difficult to play. It's very intimate, and at the same time very resonant. This song reunites all of the character's contradictions. There are also a lot of songs that are much more romantic, songs that we lose ourselves in, especially Schuman's 'Carnival' that she often plays in difficult times in the film, notably when the passion and intrusion reach their limits in the apartment. She plays a song by Bach at the end of the film, when she's really put herself to work on the piano. The song is very tempered, extremely evoking, and illustrates the fact that she shows promise in achieving a great level of piano playing.

The twists in their relationship all emanate from Marie because it is she who does not know what she wants. Every one of Emma's extremes are brought to the fore because of Marie. Marie is much less mature, precise or impulsive. She doesn't formulate things, she lets herself be carried along by the events and is very passive. The characters possessed a margin of uncertainty in the script, which meant we could mould them a little ourselves. The character of Marie was always there, of course, but I was able to propose many more facets to her character, from which Sophie chose the ones to build on.