

Mademoiselle Chambon

Cert 12A France 2009 111 mins

Crew

Director	Stéphane Brizé
Screenplay	Stéphane Brizé & Florence Vignon
Cinematography	Antoine Héberlé
Film Editing	Anne Klotz

Cast

Vincent Lindon	Jean
Sandrine Kiberlain	Véronique Chambon
Aure Atika	Anne-Marie
Jean-Marc Thibault	Le père de Jean
Arthur Le Houérou	Jérémy

Synopsis

Provincial France, the present. Jean, a builder, is a quiet, hard-working man, who lives contentedly with his wife Anne-Marie a factory worker, and their son Jérémy.

When Anne-Marie hurts her back, Jean goes to collect Jérémy from school and meets his new teacher, Véronique Chambon. She invites Jean to come to speak to the class about his work. A tentative friendship develops, and Véronique asks Jean to help her fix a broken window in her flat. But after Véronique plays a piece for Jean on her violin, something more than friendship sparks....



- The screenplay was adapted from the novel of the same name by Éric Holder. It won the Best Adapted Screenplay César award in 2010.
- The work that Véronique plays for Jean is Elgar's 'Salut d'Amour'.
- The original music in the film was composed by Angelo Ghinozzi.



Reviews

Comparing any movie with *Brief Encounter* is always going to end in tears; what film could possibly hold its own against the understated majesty of Lean's timeless depiction of love found and lost? Yet director Stéphane Brizé's quietly tremendous *Mademoiselle Chambon* does a pretty good job of reminding us that, in terms of tragic romantic clout, less is often more....

Eloquently adapted from Eric Holder's novel, this low-key, César-winning gem relies on tiny gestures – a glance, a wry smile, a longing look – to suggest great passion and inner turmoil, all conjured with wit, grace and honesty by Lindon and Kiberlain. Imagine the broiling, cataclysmic desire that so unhinged Kristin Scott Thomas's heroine in *Leaving* (a film that ended with bloodshed and chaos) being left instead to simmer and cool, somehow condensing its power in the process.

Don't be fooled by the apparent politeness of the action; there are raw nerves exposed here, albeit within the confines of two apparently well-ordered lives....

Mark Kermode, The Observer, December 2011

Stéphane Brizé, who made the superb *Not Here To Be Loved* (2005), presents another study in thwarted love that relocates the spirit of *Brief Encounter* to provincial France.

Vincent Lindon plays a steady, unassuming builder who falls helplessly for his young son's schoolteacher (Sandrine Kiberlain), just in time for his unsuspecting wife to tell him she's pregnant with their second child. Brizé keeps the script lean but offers his two leads the space and time to wring maximum feeling – mostly of regret – from their fraught silences.

It's hard to recall a film of so many haunting looks and agonised glances. And where *Brief Encounter* raised the roof with wild Rachmaninov, this chooses a modest piece of Elgar, played on the violin (heartbreakingly) by the schoolmarm.

Unusually, the film is decent enough not to patronise the third party, the builder's wife (Aure Atika), who late on gets a quiet scene of recognition and decides, heroically, to keep her own counsel. A must-see.

Anthony Quinn, The Independent, September 2011