

VERSUS PRODUCTION, HAUT ET COURT, SAMSA FILM PRESENT

QUINZAINÉ
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES 2011

THE GIANTS

A FILM BY BOULI LANNERS





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SYNOPSIS

It's summertime. Zak and Seth find themselves dead broke and ditched by their absentee mother in the family's cottage. Just like every holiday, they've resigned themselves to another shitty summer. But things change this year, when they meet Dany, a local teenager. Together, with their future at their fingertips, they begin the great and perilous journey of their lives.

INTERVIEW

WITH THE DIRECTOR

*How did *The Giants* come about?*

I wanted to tell the story of two brothers who fend for themselves, on the edge of society and away from the city. The idea that they should be two young adolescents then imposed itself because I wanted to talk about that period in life when, guided by a desire for freedom and change, everything seems possible, even if the confrontation with the adult world is often harsh.

Was it important to set the film in the heart of nature?

Nature gives the characters a horizon that wouldn't have been possible in an urban context. The relationship between the two brothers, Seth and Zack, and their friend Dany, is built up outside all social relationships. Their lives unfold in the woods as in a traditional tale and they band together to kill the wolf just like the three little pigs...

*Then do you view *The Giants* as a sort of modern tale?*

In a traditional tale, the children are often lost deep in the woods and most of the time events unfold when the parents are away, as in *The Giants*. By presenting the film as a tale, I could tackle themes such as parental absence or the lack of affection in a roundabout manner and tell the story of a friendship stronger than anything in an original manner.





The river plays an important role in the film.

Rivers fascinate me. They lead us towards adventure. They comfort us, mother us. This one allows the heroes to flee an adult world that isn't particularly appealing. I scouted all the rivers and lakes in the North of France, Luxembourg and Germany and ended up discovering the one used in the film. It was obvious: we had to shoot there! There's something comforting about allowing yourself to be carried along by the current. Indeed, that's how the film ends: they let themselves drift off in a tiny boat saying, "we're heading for something better". They don't say, "we're going to climb mountains". No, here, they let themselves be carried along.

An open ending?

Yes. They leave and I have faith in their journey. I wouldn't mind leaving with them. I've often felt that desire, to let the river carry me along and go far away. In the context of the film, leaving means going towards something better. But I'll let the viewers interpret it as they choose.

Do you feel any nostalgia for adolescence?

Adolescence is the age of every possibility, of every certainty. Fragile certainties but certainties all the same! It's the age that I regret; it's the age of revolutions. All revolutions are adolescent ones. It's the only time when you can change. It nourishes the coming adult; it's the time when things become inscribed. It's a wonderful age yet it is viewed in a dim light today. But perhaps it has always been like that...

Did your own memories of adolescence mark the film?

I remember I used to seek refuge in nature. I would spend my day in the woods and sleep in the fields.

What part does humour play in The Giants?

It brings a little lightness, a breath of air... Humour is necessary, I need it as soon as I start writing. It's an outlet. It's always easier to speak about moving or serious things through the prism of humour.

How did you go about casting the film?

Martin and Zacharie immediately imposed themselves as the two brothers. But we still needed the boy who would play Dany. We were three weeks away from shooting, in rehearsals in Luxembourg. I was getting a little desperate but Aurelie Guichard, our casting director, found Paul at last! The three boys met and, like molecules drawn to each other, it was obvious right away, before we even rehearsed. They saw each other and they hit it off immediately!

Tell us about the film's music.

While I was writing the screenplay, I made a compilation of different tunes including one by a folk group that I was crazy about. With my producer, Jacques-Henri Bronckart, I met Bram Vanparys from The Bony King of Nowhere. He read the screenplay, he came to the shoot with his instruments to bask in the atmosphere of the film and to get his inspiration from the set, and then he recorded in the natural world. The idea was to do demos and then work in the studio later... But the demos were fantastic and we never used the studio.

Why "The Giants"?

Zack, Seth and Dany choose friendship and make a sacrifice. They really grow up. They're in a precarious situation, yet they decide not to put anyone else in danger. They assume responsibility in a way that many adults wouldn't. That's when they truly become giants!



BOULI LANNERS

Bouli Lanners was born in Belgium in 1965. A painter and self-taught filmmaker, he worked in every capacity and trade on film shoots before finding fame on Canal+ Belgique with Les Snuls.

Since then, he has directed films and appeared as an actor in Belgian and French productions: *Les convoyeurs attendent*, *Petites misères*, *Aaltra*, *Bunker Paradise*, *Enfermés dehors*, *Quand la mer monte*, *Un long dimanche de fiançailles*, *Cow-Boy*, *Astérix aux jeux olympiques*, *J'ai toujours rêvé d'être un gangster*, *Eldorado*, *Louise-Michel*, *Le Vilain*, *Mammuth*, *Rien à déclarer...* He will shortly be seen in the next adventures of *Astérix and Obélix : God save Britannia* and in Jalil Lespert's *Des vents contraires*.

In 1999, he wrote and directed *Travellinckx*, a road movie in black and white super 8, which did a world tour of film festivals. Two years later, the short film *Muno* confirmed his unusual style and was selected for the Directors' Fortnight.

In 2005, he made his first feature film, *Ultranova*, a prize winner at the Berlin Festival: a tender and ironic portrait of a group of losers and a quirky view of his native Wallonia.

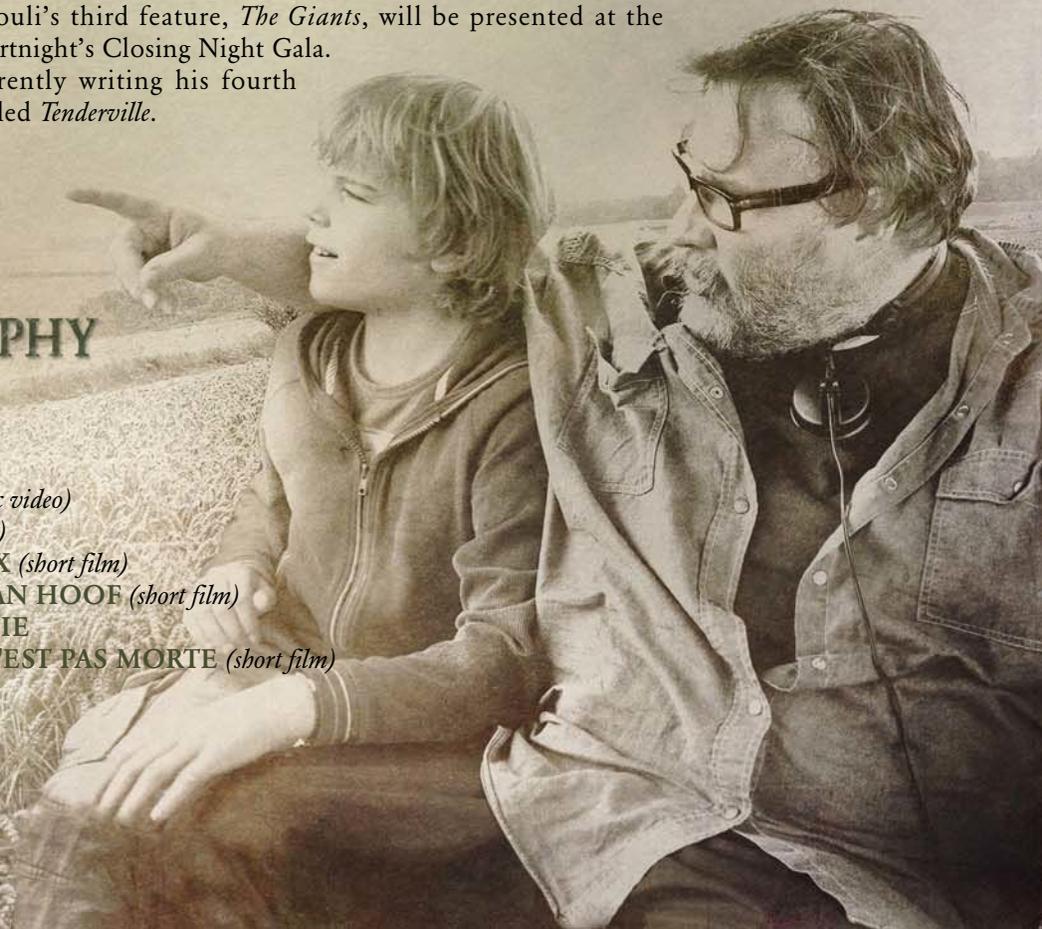
His second feature, *Eldorado*, was selected for the Directors' Fortnight in 2008 where it picked up three awards. This funny and moving road movie, in which he plays the main role, was a popular success on its theatrical release in Belgium and France.

This year, Bouli's third feature, *The Giants*, will be presented at the Directors' Fortnight's Closing Night Gala.

Bouli is currently writing his fourth feature, entitled *Tenderville*.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2011 THE GIANTS
- 2008 ELDORADO
- 2005 ULTRANOVA
- 2002 WESTERN (*music video*)
- 2001 MUNO (*short film*)
- 1999 TRAVELLINCKX (*short film*)
- 1996 LES SOEURS VAN HOOFF (*short film*)
- 1995 NON, WALLONIE
TA CULTURE N'EST PAS MORTE (*short film*)



CAST

Zak
Seth
Dany
Angel
Bœuf
Martha
Rosa

Zacharie CHASSERIAUD
Martin NISSEN
Paul BARTEL
Karim LEKLOU
Didier TOUPY
Gwen BERROU
Marthe KELLER

Directed by
Written by
Director of Photography
Sound
Set Design
Costumes
Editor
Sound design
Original Music
1st AD
Photos

Bouli LANNERS
Bouli LANNERS
Elise ANCION
Jean-Paul DE ZAEYTIJD
Philippe KOHN
Paul ROUSCHOP
Elise ANCION
Ewin RYCKAERT
Marc BASTIEN
The BONY KING OF NOWHERE
Dimitri LINDER
Patrick MULLER

CREW

A film produced by Jacques-Henri Bronckart, Olivier Bronckart, Jani Thiltges, Carole Scotta, Simon Arnal. Executive producer Gwennaëlle Libert. Associate producer Arlette Zylberberg. A coproduction Versus production, Haut et Court, Samsa Film, Arte France Cinema, RTBF (Belgian television). With the support of Film Fund Luxembourg, Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la Communauté française de Belgique et de VOO, Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée. With the participation of Orange Cinéma Séries, CANAL+, Belgacom, ARTE France Cinema, and Région wallonne. Supported by the Federal Government of Belgium's Tax Shelter in partnership with Inver Invest, Casa Kafka Pictures, Dexia. With help from the Media Program of the European Community.

TV5MONDE

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