

VARIANCE
FILMS

presents

GUY AND MADELINE



ON A PARK BENCH

A Film by Damien Chazelle

Release Date: November 5th, 2010 (NYC) – November 12th (expansion)

Running Time: 82 minutes

Shooting Format: 16mm

Rating: Not Rated

Official Website: www.guyandmadeline.com

To Download Stills/Materials: www.variancefilms.com/press

Publicity/Press Contact:

Steve Beeman/Falco Ink

850 7th Avenue #1005 New York, NY 10019

212.445.7100 / stevenmbeeman@falcoink.com

Distributor Contact:

Dylan Marchetti/Variance Films

99 Madison Ave #614 New York, NY 10016

212.537.6769 / dylan@variancefilms.com

CAST

Guy	JASON PALMER
Madeline	DESIREE GARCIA
Elena	SANDHA KHIN
Frank	FRANK GARVIN
Andre	ANDRE HAYWARD
Alma	ALMA PRELEC
Paul	BERNARD CHAZELLE
Eli	ELI GERSTENLAUER
Keith	KEITH GROSS-HILL
Jerry	JERRY QUINN
Maureen	MOREEN McCARTHY
Willie	WILLIE RODRIGUEZ
Zerek	ZEREK PALMER
Guy's Mom	BEVERLY PALMER
Guy's Sister	SHAREE PALMER
Guy's Brother	T.J. PALMER
Pianist	JOE DELLA PENNA
Glass Harmonica Player	VERA MEYER
Dancer at Party	KELLY KALETA
Girl at Party	VANESSA POPE
Kevin	KEVIN HARRIS
Sophie	ELIZABETH TINGUE
John	GONZALO DIGENIO
Eddie	EDDIE WAKES
Karen	KAREN ADELMAN

Dancers at Summer Shack

SUZANNE BOUFFARD	KELLY BURK
CAROLYN GLICKLICH	CHRIS ROWSE

CREW

Written and Directed by **DAMIEN CHAZELLE**

Music by **JUSTIN HURWITZ**
Lyrics by **DAMIEN CHAZELLE**

Choreography by **KELLY KALETA**

Edited by **DAMIEN CHAZELLE**
W.A.W. PARKER

Associate Producers **EVANGELO KOEHLER**
RICHARD RUIZ

Executive Producers **ARLEEN McGLADE**
J. MARK INMAN

Producers **JASMINE McGLADE**
MIHAI DINULESCU

AWARDS/NOMINATIONS

WINNER – Special Jury Prize, Torino Film Festival
WINNER – Best Fiction Feature, Chicago Int'l Movies and Music Festival
NOMINEE – Mavericks Award, Calgary International Film Festival
NOMINEE- Gotham Awards, “Best Film Not Playing at a Theater Near You”

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Tribeca Film Festival AFI Los Angeles Thessalonki International Film Festival
Mar del Plata International Film Festival Torino Film Festival Mill Valley Film Festival
Starz Denver Film Festival Viennale Sarajevo Film Festival Northwest Film Festival
Calgary International Film Festival Cinema Arts Festival Houston CPH PIX
International Film Festival Prague Minneapolis/St. Paul International Film Festival
Belfast Film Festival Martha’s Vineyard Film Festival

SYNOPSIS

Long form

A full-fledged song-and-dance musical written and directed by Damien Chazelle, *GUY AND MADELINE ON A PARK BENCH* recasts the MGM musical tradition in a gritty, vérité style.

Guy and Madeline have been dating for three months. He's an up-and-coming Boston jazz trumpeter, she an aimless introvert looking for work. But the excitement of first love has faded, and Guy's wandering eye is soon caught by Elena, a more outgoing woman. When Elena and Guy meet on a crowded subway car, sparks fly—and that spells the end of Guy and Madeline's romance.

With Guy unexpectedly off in his new relationship, Madeline tries to rebuild her life. She changes apartments, searches for a new job, takes up an instrument, and goes on dates. Nothing clicks—until she travels to New York on a whim and meets a Frenchman named Paul. Meanwhile, Guy begins to wonder if he has made a mistake. Elena shows no interest in his music, and time and again the memories of Madeline come calling.

By the time Guy resolves to win her back, Madeline has seemingly moved on. He knocks on her door, but she's nowhere to be found. He finally runs into her on a forgotten corner, where the two former lovers are faced with a question. Should they let the past go, or rekindle a lost romance?

Featuring all-original music composed by Justin Hurwitz and recorded by the Bratislava Symphony Orchestra and choreography by Kelly Kaleta, *GUY AND MADELINE ON A PARK BENCH* throws out the digital video "revolution" by shooting on black and white 16mm film stock, firmly rejecting the idea that low-budget filmmaking has to be a series of compromises. Embracing the rawness of real-life heartache as a storytelling tool, but never forsaking toe-tapping entertainment value, *GUY AND MADELINE ON A PARK BENCH* is a true hybrid, a pioneer that brings together the best of the 1940s musicals, 1960s New Wave and 1960s-70s cinéma vérité era with today's cultural sensibilities to create something that feels completely of the moment.

Short form

A full-fledged song-and-dance musical written and directed by Damien Chazelle, *GUY AND MADELINE ON A PARK BENCH* tells the story of two separated lovers, a young jazz trumpeter (Palmer) and an introverted woman (Garcia), who slowly wind their way back into each other's lives through a series of romances and near-romances punctuated by song. Recasting the MGM musical tradition in a gritty, near-documentary style, the film features all original songs recorded by the Bratislava Symphony Orchestra and choreography by Kelly Kaleta.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

What's really wonderful about the old Hollywood musicals—the smaller ones, the cheaper ones, *HALLELUJAH I'M A BUM*, *SUMMER STOCK*, that sort of thing—is the way they pull their numbers out of real life. A creaky floorboard and a fallen newspaper become the ingredients for a Gene Kelly tap solo. Dialogue just bleeds into song. Street noises bleed into a symphony.

I wanted to make a musical—where people do spontaneously break into song and dance as though it were the most normal thing in the world—but set it in the world I knew. The world of Boston, of young people, of jazz musicians. A world where no one says what they mean, or knows how to, where a romance can end with a cell phone call or a text. I wanted to make a movie about people who could only communicate through music.

I may have used fantasy as a framework, but for me it's all about real life. I approached a lot of the film as though it were a documentary, and to me that's not so far off from what the musical—so artificial, yes, but so concerned with documenting musical performances, for letting them play out in their own time—is all about.

There's something about that old footage of jazz musicians in the fifties and sixties, the grainy black-and-white 16mm stuff, where you can see Thelonious Monk get up and dance on-stage in the middle of a song, or Dexter Gordon tune his horn before venturing out before his audience, or Charlie Parker giving us his sweet and sad smile after playing the most beautiful solo you'll ever hear. No history of the musical would be complete without considering those documentary fragments.

I think jazz and cinema struck a beautiful relationship in those years, and I'd like to try to recapture that; these are art forms born at the same time, and they can feed off each other in amazing ways. If I followed an improvisatory style in *GUY AND MADELINE*, it's maybe because that's what made me feel closest to those great jazz players—players I used to want to join, back when I'd lock myself in my basement and practice my drums all day long.

Jazz is all about romance. The best jazz films were made when the music still felt new, I think, stuff like *JAZZ DANCE*, which a young Ricky Leacock shot, or *AFTER HOURS*. Those jam-session movies are love stories, to me, but played out entirely in music. It's muted romance, maybe, but romance all the same. One of the most swooningly romantic things I've ever seen is the look Billie Holiday gives to Lester Young on that Robert Herridge segment—the TV airing of their session together, in 1957. It's the kind of look only musicians give to each other; it's not really about romance even, but it's romantic nonetheless. Her weary eyes stare at him as he plays a solo that answers her vocal line, and her mouth wrinkles into just a slight etching of a smile. You can see a whole life flash in her eyes, and a whole love saga told in his phrasing...

It's only because the moment was filmed that it can play itself out again and again—and that, to me is just beautiful.

-- Damien Chazelle

DAMIEN CHAZELLE ON THE PRODUCTION

This film began as a short for my senior thesis at Harvard's Visual and Environmental Studies Department, advised by Robb Moss (director of 'The Same River Twice' and 'Secrecy'). The summer before my senior year I watched and rewatched as many 30's, 40's, and 50's musicals as I could get my hands on, writing the film's script and lyrics while composer Justin Hurwitz wrote the music. I wound up leaving school to expand the film, and worked on it for three years, raising money along the way to keep the whole thing going.

My prime collaborators in the process were fellow Harvard grads and friends from school: producer Jasmine McGlade (a filmmaker herself, currently directing a film starring Karen Black and Judy Marte), W.A.W. (Adam) Parker, and Justin. The initial funding came from Harvard's first Artist Development Fellowship; once I had left school to turn the short into a feature, financing came from donations and odd jobs. We would shoot as money came in, filming in Boston and New York with minimal equipment. Crews were so small that we built a special rig to allow one person to do camera and sound at once if need be, and to give us a makeshift video feed: Adam hooked our HDV camera (which we were using for sound) to the top of our 16mm Aaton (for image), and the resulting apparatus was unwieldy but very useful (especially as crews were often comprised of only one or two people).

The biggest expenses for the film were the 16mm stock and the music. Though we had very little money, we knew we wanted a ninety-piece orchestra to record the film's score. Justin drew heavily from Michel Legrand and other great French New Wave film composers for inspiration, and we needed a sound that would be lush, sweeping, and performed with real instruments, instead of programmed. We decided on the Bratislava Symphony Orchestra, and raising the requisite funds proved a huge challenge. In fact, we hadn't yet scrounged together all the money necessary for the Bratislava recording session by the time Justin flew out there, and spent a stressful few hours racing against Justin's plane to procure the remaining funds in time.

The film was cast entirely in Boston, partly through auditions, partly through my scouring of the city's tap-dance and jazz scenes. Finding Jason Palmer was a particular surprise. I had decided the lead in the film should be a drummer, and had gone to Wally's Jazz Café to see one such potential drummer play. However, I was immediately struck by the trumpeter on stage. I went up to him after the show and asked him if he'd be interested in playing the film's lead. Thankfully, he was.

Neither he nor Desiree Garcia (who plays Madeline, was at the time finishing her dissertation on 30's musicals at Boston University, and now teaches film studies at Brown University in Providence) had ever acted before. Though we had a script as a blueprint, we incorporated a lot of documentary footage into the film's narrative: whole scenes, like Madeline's initial date at a sushi restaurant or Guy's family coming to visit, were edited entirely from documentary footage, and many of the performances were filmed live. Because of the huge shooting ratio this kind of filming required, we originally considered shooting on video, but in the end we opted for film, as it was the only medium that truly suited the story and the aesthetic we were aiming for.

To record and engineer much of the film's music, I worked with Maxwell Drummey, also

a Harvard classmate. I met Maxwell my freshman year of college, when he and I started a band with three other musicians (Justin Hurwitz was one of them), called Chester French. Two years later, Justin and I quit the band to begin making 'Guy and Madeline' together. A year after that, Chester French was signed by Pharrell Williams of The Neptunes and N.E.R.D. to his label, Star Trak; their debut album, 'Love the Future' (parts for which I played drums on) was released last April, and hit #77 on the Billboard charts.

For the film's dance numbers, I got in touch with Julia Boynton, a tap-dancer who Maxwell had recorded for a 'Love the Future' track. She hosted monthly tap jams in Boston, which I began frequenting, looking out for potential dancers and choreographers. It was there that I found Kelly Kaleta, who became the film's choreographer (and performs in 'Love in the Fall' and 'Boy in the Park'), Eli Gerstenlauer (who sings and dances with Kelly in 'Love in the Fall'), and Suzanne Bouffard, Carolyn Glicklich, Kelly Burk, and Chris Rowse (the dancers on 'Boy in the Park'). For 'Boy in the Park', I was lucky enough to be able to shoot in Jasper White's famous Summer Shack Restaurant in Boston – which Jasmine had originally suggested as a location.

Shooting was an off-and-on process, with many bumps in the road. The footage from the first 'Love in the Fall' shoot was accidentally destroyed by the lab, so we had to shoot the entire number again. In the end, we shot about 20 hours of material. Robb Moss gave feedback throughout the film's making, and his knowledge proved invaluable. John Lithgow was one of the film's earliest supporters -- as was Andrew Bujalski ('Funny Ha Ha', 'Mutual Appreciation'), whose advice helped me immensely through post-production and afterward. Editing finished in the fall of 2008, immediately after which Jasmine and I, who had begun dating during production, got engaged.

'Guy and Madeline', as a project, proved a way for me to combine my two biggest passions: music and film. I grew up in New Jersey and Paris, and during high school jazz drumming was my primary pursuit. I practiced six hours a day, played on street corners in New York, and performed with the Princeton High School Studio Band, conducted by the late Dr. Anthony J. Biancosino and named the top jazz program of its kind in the country by *Down Beat Magazine*. While a Studio Band drummer, I performed as part of the opening act of the 2000 JVC Jazz Festival in New York, and won Best Solo Drums at the 2003 America's Best High School Jazz Competition and Best Rhythm Section Soloist at the Dunnellen Invitational Jazz Festival that same year. Music was my life. While at Harvard, I returned to filmmaking, an earlier passion, hoping to one day make a film about jazz. 'Guy and Madeline' is that film. I even got to perform a bit: I played the drums for 'Boy in the Park', and play a brief solo on-screen, when I appear as Madeline's drum teacher. Even better -- my father, a computer scientist at Princeton University, plays the role of Paul in the film and performs one of the movie's musical numbers.

CAST AND CREW BIOS:

Cast

Jason Palmer (Guy)

Jason teaches at the New England Conservatory and has performed with Wynton Marsalis, Common, Ravi Coltrane, Greg Osby, Roy Hargrove, and Roy Haynes. He has been featured in *Down Beat Magazine* as one of the top twenty-five “Trumpeters for the Future” and last year released his debut album as leader, *Songbook*, with Ayva Musica. He first made his name jamming at Boston’s famed Wally’s Jazz Café, and has since then played such venues as the Blue Note, the Village Vanguard, Fat Cat, Kennedy Center, and *The Tonight Show*, and such festivals as Newport, Tanglewood, and Rotterdam.

Desiree Garcia (Madeline)

Desiree studied race, ethnicity, and classical Hollywood at Boston University, where she obtained her Ph.D. while shooting *Guy and Madeline on a Park Bench*. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Film Studies at Brown University.

Sandha Khin (Elena)

Sandha grew up in Portsmouth, NH, received her BA in Theater Arts at Brandeis University, and recently completed an MFA in Classical Acting at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London.

Andre Hayward (Andre)

Andre is a member of the San Francisco Jazz Collective, led by Joshua Redman, and has worked as a trombonist for the Dave Holland Big Band and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. He performed and recorded with singer and bandleader Betty Carter for five years, and has shared the stage with, among others, the Duke Ellington Orchestra, Slide Hampton, Jimmy Heath, and the Mingus Dynasty Big Band.

Crew

Damien Chazelle (Director/Writer/Co-Editor)

Damien Chazelle was born in 1985 and grew up in Paris and Princeton, NJ, where he devoted himself to jazz drumming, playing everything from Berlin jazz clubs to the Trenton Heritage Day Festival to New York street corners and subway stops. In 2003, he won Best Solo Drums at America’s Best High School Jazz Competition and Outstanding Rhythm Section Soloist at the Dunellen Invitational Jazz Festival.

Guy and Madeline on a Park Bench began as a short for Damien’s senior thesis when he was an undergraduate at Harvard University. He eventually left school to expand the film into his first feature and worked on it for three years, shooting off and on as money came in, returning to graduate in 2008.

Jasmine McGlade (Producer): Jasmine McGlade Chazelle was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and grew up in Littleton, Colorado and London, England. Jasmine graduated Harvard University in 2007, where she worked closely with award-winning filmmakers Gina Kim, Alfred Guzzetti, Robb Moss and Jan Schütte. After college she

worked for Kimberly Peirce, writer/director of *Boys Don't Cry* and *Stop Loss*.

Jasmine recently finished shooting her first written and directed feature, *Maria My Love*, starring Oscar-nominated actress Karen Black (*Easy Rider*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *Nashville*), and two-time Spirit Award nominee Judy Marte (*Raising Victor Vargas*, *On the Outs*).

Justin Hurwitz (Composer): Justin was born in Los Angeles and attended Harvard, where he studied music and wrote for the Lampoon.

W.A.W. Parker (Co-Editor): W.A.W. (or Adam) Parker grew up in Bozeman, Montana. He moved to the East Coast to attend Harvard, where he studied filmmaking.

Mihai Dinulescu (Producer): Mihai Dinulescu was born in Romania and has lived in Switzerland and Canada. He has worked with Media Tenor and has studied with numerous political figures, including UN Ambassador Jonathan Moore, democratic campaign manager Steve Jarding, and Jesse Ventura.

Kelly Kaleta (Choreographer): Kelly Kaleta grew up in Massachusetts and now lives in New York. She was a cast member of Chicago's famed tap revue *Imagine Tap*, and was a performer and choreographer for Gil Stroming's off-Broadway production, *Break the Floor*.

Julia Boynton (Tap Dance Consultant): Julia Boynton, a world-renowned tap dancer and teacher, is producer of the Beantown Tap Fest, Boston's annual summer tap dance festival, and has performed with Brian Jones's *All-Tap Revue* and Heather Cornell's *Manhattan Tap*.

Shot on Eastman Kodak Double-X Negative Film 7222
Processed at Lab-Link, Inc. and DuArt Film & Video, New York, NY
Telecine by Larry Shore Color Correction by Evan Schwenterly Mastered at Modulus

"Guy and Madeline on a Park Bench" was a sponsored project of IFP (www.ifp.org)

VARIANCE FILMS in association with VARILIGHT FILMS present
A film by DAMIEN CHAZELLE
"GUY AND MADELINE ON A PARK BENCH"
JASON PALMER DESIREE GARCIA SANDHA KHIN FRANK GARVIN
ANDRE HAYWARD ALMA PRELEC KEITH GROSS-HILL ELI GERSTENLAUER
BERNARD CHAZELLE JERRY QUINN MOREEN McCARTHY
Music by JUSTIN HURWITZ Lyrics by DAMIEN CHAZELLE
Choreography by KELLY KALETA
Editors DAMIEN CHAZELLE W.A.W. PARKER
Associate Producers EVANGELO KOEHLER RICHARD RUIZ
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