

CODA

LIFE WITH MUSIC



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Directed by **CLAUDE LALONDE**

Written by **LOUIS GODBOUT**

CANADA | 2019 | DRAMA | 96 MINUTES | 4K

A Clinamen Films Production

filmoptioninternational.com

A man in a dark suit and white shirt is looking down at a grand piano. The piano is open, showing the internal mechanism with strings and hammers. The scene is dimly lit, with a row of small lights visible in the background. The man's reflection is visible in the piano's lid.

**A famous pianist
struggling with stage
fright finds inspiration
with a free-spirited
music critic.**

SYNOPSIS



Henry Cole is an acclaimed pianist who returns to the stage after a prolonged hiatus. During his inaugural concert, he is afflicted with a severe case of stage fright and barely avoids disaster. In the following days, his condition worsens, he becomes more and more unstable and his career is hanging by a thread. Bewildered and ready to pack it in, he meets Helen Morrison, a former pianist turned music critic, who wants to write an article on him. She asks for an interview. A reserved and austere man, Henry declines. Helen persists and eventually gains his trust. A peculiar relationship develops between the two, based on love of music and a shared sensibility. Henry feels fortified and wants to resume his concert tour. Helen worries that this renewed confidence is only superficial. She suggests a trip, to attend a concert in a remote place, Sils-Maria in the Swiss Alps. In a time of personal crisis, she once found her answer there. Perhaps he can now find his.

CREATIVE NOTES

Anybody who's ever played a musical instrument knows how easy it is to fail. This applies to music as well as to any other form of complex activity unfolding rapidly. And the higher the stakes, the less room for error, the slipperier things get. A virtuoso musician inspires awe as much by what she is able to accomplish (with respect to speed, dexterity, memory, etc.) as by what she is able to avoid (errors, memory lapses, etc.).

One sure way to make mistakes is to think about not making any. This is the paradox of concentration. One cannot will oneself not to think. Athletes commonly refer to being in "the zone" or in a state of "flow" as the ultimate form of concentration, a state closer to focussed awareness than hardfought attention. What a concert pianist has achieved through countless hours of analytical practice is the ability and the self-confidence to let the system run on its own, so to speak. Simply put, a pianist is free to make music because she is no longer concerned with the notes. Excess of consciousness is the enemy of good performance.

In this respect, making music is not so different from aging. Success requires staying in the moment. Henry Cole struggles on both fronts for the same reason. He has lost his innocence, his playfulness, now that the advancing years have made him more aware of the fragility of things, including the small miracle of his own talent. His condition is not exceptional, we are all afraid to fail, we all wonder when our luck is going to run out, not because we are especially neurotic, but because we are conscious and flawed and mortal. What matters is how we deal with our condition. As Woody Allen put it, "everyone knows the same truth and our lives consist of how we choose to distort it". Distorting it completely may provide temporary solace, but at the cost of not living a fully human life. Not distorting it at all is more than what most of us can bear. That's where the aesthetic experience might come to the rescue.

Coda : Life with Music is a film about music. Beethoven wasn't a philosopher, but it is hard to listen to one of his late Sonatas or Quartets without feeling that he knows a thing or two about our condition, our hopes and failures, about what it means to be a human being. This might just be an illusion of course, but because it helps us to accept our own fate, it is something like a veridical illusion. What basically happens to Henry Cole is that he has suffered and is growing old and is beginning to doubt himself. What he seeks without quite knowing it is someone who understands his predicament, who doesn't try to comfort him with empty peptalks and cheers and falsehoods, someone who feels for and with him, and in the process who might help him come to terms with himself, which hopefully means living both a serene and truthful life. That someone will come in the form of actual human beings, through subtle gestures of empathy and fleeting moments of humanity, and in a renewed connection with nature. But it will also come through the legacy of great composers. Above all, *Coda* is a film about music as a life companion.

“

Cheeky and playfully taunting.
Classical aficionados will be mightily
pleased by a soundtrack brimming with
piano masterworks.

Joe Leydon, Variety

”



PATRICK STEWART IN THE ROLE OF HENRY COLE

Patrick Stewart (born 13 July 1940) is an English actor, director and producer whose work has included roles on stage, television, and film, in a career spanning six decades. He has been nominated for Olivier, Tony, Golden Globe, Emmy, Screen Actors Guild, and Saturn Awards.

Beginning his career with a long run as a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stewart received the 1979 Laurence Olivier Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role for his performance in *Antony and Cleopatra in the West End*. Stewart's first major screen roles were in BBC-broadcast television productions during the mid-late 1970s, including *Hedda*, and the *I, Claudius* miniseries.

From the 1980s onward, Stewart began working in American television and film, with prominent leading roles such as Captain Jean-Luc Picard in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, its subsequent films, and 2020's *Star Trek: Picard*; as Professor Charles Xavier in the *X-Men* series of superhero films; the lead of the Starz TV series *Blunt Talk*; and voice roles such as CIA Deputy Director Avery Bullock in *American Dad!* and the narrator in *Ted*. Having remained with the Royal Shakespeare Company, in 2008 Stewart played King Claudius in *Hamlet in the West End* and won a second Olivier Award.

In 1993, TV Guide named Stewart the Best Dramatic Television Actor of the 1980s. He received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on December 16th, 1996. In 2010, Stewart was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for services to drama.

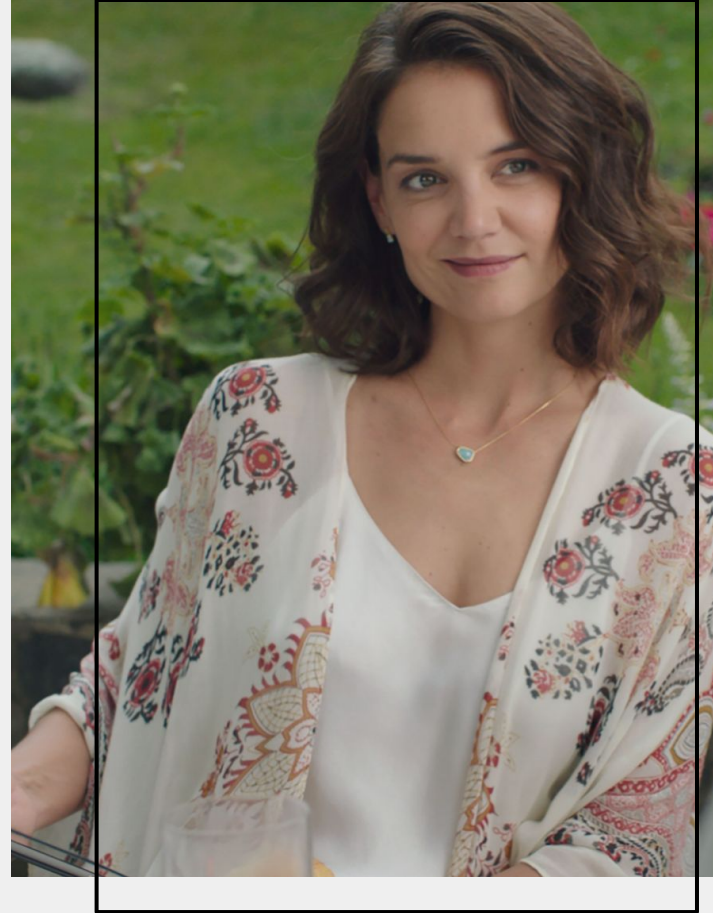


KATIE HOLMES IN THE ROLE OF HELEN MORRISON

Kate Noelle Holmes (born December 18, 1978) is an American actress. She first achieved fame as Joey Potter on the television series *Dawson's Creek* (1998–2003).

She made her feature film debut in Ang Lee's *The Ice Storm* in 1997. Subsequent film roles include: *Go*, *Teaching Mrs. Tingle* (both 1999), *Wonder Boys*, *The Gift* (both 2000), *Abandon*, *Phone Booth* (both 2002), *The Singing Detective*, *Pieces of April* (both 2003), *Batman Begins*, *Thank You for Smoking* (both 2005), *Mad Money* (2008), *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* (2010), *Jack and Jill* (2011), *Miss Meadows* (2014), *Woman in Gold*, *Touched with Fire* (both 2015), *Logan Lucky* (2017) and the independent acclaimed film *CODA* (2019).

In 2008, she made her Broadway theatre debut in a production of Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*. In 2011, she played Jacqueline Kennedy in the TV miniseries *The Kennedys*, a role she reprised in *The Kennedys: After Camelot* (2017). She made her directorial debut with the 2016 film *All We Had*, in which she also starred.



GIANCARLO ESPOSITO IN THE ROLE OF PAUL

Giancarlo Giuseppe Alessandro Esposito (born April 26, 1958) is an American actor, director, and producer. He is best known for portraying Gus Fring in the AMC crime drama series *Breaking Bad* (2009–2011) and the prequel series *Better Call Saul* (2017–present), for which he won the Critics' Choice Television Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Drama Series and earned three nominations for the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series.

Esposito's other television roles include Federal Agent Mike Giardello in the NBC police drama series *Homicide: Life on the Street* (1998–1999), Sidney Glass / Magic Mirror in the ABC supernatural drama series *Once Upon a Time* (2011–2018), Tom Neville in the NBC science fiction series *Revolution* (2012–2014), Dr. Edward Ruskins in the Netflix comedy-drama series *Dear White People* (2017–present), Stan Edgar in the Prime Video superhero drama series *The Boys* (2019–present), and Moff Gideon in the Disney+ space western drama series *The Mandalorian* (2019–present), the lattermost of which earned him a Primetime Emmy Award nomination.

He is also known for his appearances in several Spike Lee films, such as *School Daze* (1988), *Do the Right Thing* (1989), *Mo' Better Blues* (1990), and *Malcolm X* (1992). Esposito's other major films include *King of New York* (1990), *Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man* (1991), *Fresh* (1994), *The Usual Suspects* (1995), *Ali* (2001), *Last Holiday* (2006), *Gospel Hill* (2008), *Rabbit Hole* (2010), *Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials* (2015), *The Jungle Book* (2016), *Money Monster* (2016), *Okja* (2017), *Maze Runner: The Death Cure* (2018), and *Stargirl* (2020).



CREDITS

DIRECTED BY

Claude Lalonde

STORY BY

Louis Godbout

PRODUCED BY

Nicolas Comeau

WITH

Patrick Stewart IN THE ROLE OF Henry Cole

Katie Holmes IN THE ROLE OF Helen Morrison

Giancarlo Esposito IN THE ROLE OF Paul

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Nicolas Comeau, Louis Godbout, Sibylla Hesse & Claude Lalonde

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Guy Dufaux

SOUND

Stéphane Houle, Christian Rivest & Stéphane Bergeron

EDITING

Claude Palardy

CASTING

Heidi Levitt & Francis Cantin

CLAUDE LALONDE – DIRECTOR

Claude Lalonde was born in Hull, Quebec, where he had his first experiences in filmmaking, writing and directing numerous short films and corporate videos. He then pursued his work in Toronto as an assistant director on several American films.

After moving to Montreal, he worked as a Youth Center educator, before gradually returning to screenwriting with *Le grand zèle* a made-for-tv movie nominated for best-screenplay at the Gemini Awards (French-Canadian TV).

Writing became a full-time activity with *Les 3 p'tits cochons* (Best Box-Office in Canada for a Canadian Film in 2007, plus a remake in France in 2013 titled *Le grand méchant loup*), *10 ½* (Grand Prix at the 2010 Mannheim-Heidelberg Film Festival and Critic's Prize at the Bratislava Film Festival).

Script-consultant for two TV-series: *Mon meilleur ami* (5 x 60 mins; nominated for Best Screenplays – 2013 Gemini Awards), and *L'chum à Chabot* (10 x 30 mins for Quebec's TVA network). He remains busy as a feature film screenwriter for comedies and dramas such as *Filière 13* (2010), *3 P'tis cochons #2* (2016), *Origami* (2017) and *Malek* (2018).

He has recently been signed to work as a director on three movie projects, with *Coda : Life With Music* being his first such assignment.



LOUIS GODBOUT – SCREENWRITER

Louis Godbout studied law and philosophy, the latter subject which he then taught for fifteen years in a Montreal college. In parallel with teaching, he has pursued a career as a writer, and has published four essays (Du golf - parcours philosophique ; Nietzsche et la probité ; Hiérarchies ; Le discours du ressentiment), before recently turning to cinema and screenwriting. *Coda : Life with Music* was his first screenplay (produced by Clinamen Films, 2020), followed by *Une révision* (produced by Cinémaginaire, 2021 ; co-written), for which he received a nomination at the Prix Iris 2022.

Interested in all aspects of filmmaking, he has formed his own production company and set out to direct himself his next two screenplays : *Mont Foster* (Primatice Films, 2020) and *The Cheaters* (Primatice Films, to be released in summer 2022).

Louis was born and lives in Montreal.



NICOLAS COMEAU – PRODUCER

After university degrees in communication studies, literature and film, Nicolas Comeau earned in 2002 a graduate degree in film production from Montreal's prestigious National Institute of Image and Sound (INIS).

He worked for three years producing music videos and commercials, and along the way produced several short films: *Portrait of the artist as his muse* (dir. Etienne Desrosiers), *Trailer Park Unicorn* (dir. Sid Zanforlin), *Hard Man To Love* (dir. Douglas Bensadoun) *Passage* (dir. Karl Lemieux), *A Girl and a Killer* (dir. Ann Arson), *Choking Game* (dir. Cynthia Tremblay) all of which have been presented in Canadian and international festivals (Clermont-Ferrand, Namur, Dresden, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Hamburg, Palm Springs, Aarhus, etc.).

In 2005 he line produced the France/Canada coproduction *The Passenger* (dir. François Rotger) and in 2008, he co produced *Story of Jen* (dir. François Rotger) another France/Canada coproduction that has been released in France and Canada, as well as screening in competition in Locarno, Pusan, Seattle & Hong Kong. The feature *A Cloud in a Glass of Water* by Srinath C. Samarasinghe coproduced with Avenue B Productions (France) premiered in Rotterdam 2012. Bruce LaBruce's *Gerontophilia* (coproduced with New Real Films) premiered at Venice Days and TIFF in summer 2013 and went on to over 70 international festivals and sold to a dozen territories. Cristian Jimenez's *Voice Over* (coproduced with France & Chile) premiered in TIFF and in competition in San Sebastian, 2014; additional festivals include Toulouse, Biarritz, Tokyo, etc. Philippe Grandrieux's *Despite the Night* (coproduced with France) premiered in Rotterdam 2016 and followed with the Berlin's Critics week, Bafici, Sao Paulo, AFI, etc. Currently in festivals, *Roads in February* by Katherine Jerkovic (TIFF, Canada's Top Ten, Talinn Black Nights, Mannheim-Heidelberg, etc.) and *Saint-Narcisse* by Bruce LaBruce (Giornate degli Autori, Venice).

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Written by **LOUIS GODBOUT**

FILMOPTION INTERNATIONAL PRESENT A CLINAMEN FILMS PRODUCTION

WITH PATRICK STEWART, KATIE HOLMES, GIANCARLO ESPOSITO

CASTING HEIDI LEVITT, FRANCIS CANTIN, BRUNO ROSATO CINEMATOGRAPHER GUY DUFAUX

PRODUCTION DESIGNER CAMILLE PARENT COSTUME DESIGNER GINETTE MAGNY EDITOR CLAUDE PALARDY

SOUND STÉPHANE HOULE, CHRISTIAN RIVEST, STÉPHANE BERGERON

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS NICOLAS COMEAU, LOUIS GODBOUT, SIBYLLA HESSE, CLAUDE LALONDE

PRODUCED BY NICOLAS COMEAU WRITTEN BY LOUIS GODBOUT

DIRECTED BY CLAUDE LALONDE

"DAGGER-SHARP DIALOGUE, WONDERFUL PERFORMANCES AND (...) A HEAVENLY SCORE."

- RICHARD ROEPER, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

PATRICK
STEWART

KATIE
HOLMES

GIANCARLO
ESPOSITO




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DIRECTED BY CLAUDE LALONDE WRITTEN BY LOUIS GODBOUT



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PRODUCED BY NICOLAS COMEAU WRITTEN BY LOUIS GODBOUT DIRECTED BY CLAUDE LALONDE

CLINAMEN   

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