

The Son of Joseph

Cert 12A France /Belgium 2016 113 mins

Crew

Director/

Screenplay Eugène Green
Cinematography Raphaël O'Byrne
Film Editing Valérie Loiseleux

Cast

Victor Ezenfis Vincent
Natacha Régnier Marie
Fabrizio Rongione Joseph
Mathieu Amalric Oscar
Maria de Medeiros Violette
Eugène Green Concierge

Synopsis

Paris, the present. Vincent is an angry and conflicted teenager who has been brought up by his self-sacrificing single mother, Marie. He becomes even more troubled when he discovers the identity of his biological father Oscar, who is a book publisher, and an arrogant unrepentant libertine.

Vincent plots revenge on Oscar for abandoning him and his mother, but in the process meets Oscar's brother, the humble Joseph - who, he soon realises, has far more potential as the longed-for father-figure....



Booking Information

Distributor: MUBI

DVD bookings:

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Available: December 2017



Reviews

Connoisseur's favourite Eugène Green (*The Portuguese Nun*) continues to create quirky pictures of exceptional quality that combine wry insights into human nature with perceptive musings on the healing power of art. He's on playful form in this study of fatherhood, faith and fraternity.....

Staged with Green's trademark baroque theatricality, this slender tale is sumptuously photographed by Raphaël O'Byrne and full of charming set pieces, with the visits to the Louvre and a madrigal concert by Le Poème Harmonique only being topped by Maria de Medeiros's splendid cameo at a literary soirée. Brisk, witty, devotional and unabashedly intellectual, this is a deadpan delight.

David Parkinson, Radio Times, December 2016

Parisian 15-year-old Vincent is aggrieved by his single mum's insistence that he has no father, and resorts to subterfuge and cunning as he investigates his paternity. Other filmmakers might turn that plot summary into a naturalistic tale of teenage angst, but not director Eugène Green.

Instead, the arthouse fave channels his historical and theological obsessions into a modern comedy of manners conveyed in the artificially declamatory style of French classical drama. Vincent (Victor Ezenfis) possesses all the regulation Apple products, but he's motivated by Caravaggio's painting 'The Sacrifice of Isaac', believes in the innate goodness of certain people and eventually lives out his own version of the Nativity story.

Green certainly has a unique worldview and this elegantly composed film has a wry, left-field charm, sustained by performances both sincere (saintly mother Natacha Régnier) and witty (literary louse Mathieu Amalric). The tone careens from high seriousness to easy parody in a way that makes the film slightly imprecise and slippery.

Still, nothing else quite like it out there, that's for sure.

Trevor Johnston, Time Out, December 2016

FILM FACTS...

- ☆ The film premiered at the 2016 Berlin Film Festival, and was also shown at the London Film Festival
- ☆ Writer/director Eugène Green was born in New York but has lived in France since the 1960's, working mainly in Baroque theatre, but also writing poetry and novels. He made his first film, *Toutes les nuits*, in 2001. He has a small acting part in *Le fils de Joseph*, as the concierge at Oscar's hotel
- ☆ The music in the film is by the early Italian Baroque composer Emilio de' Cavalieri