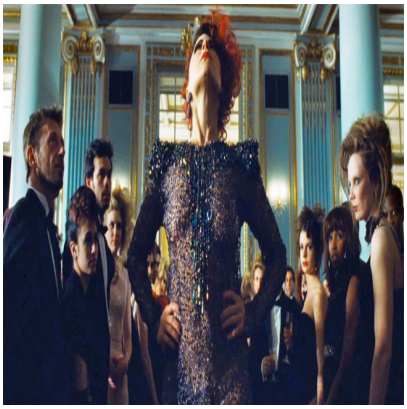
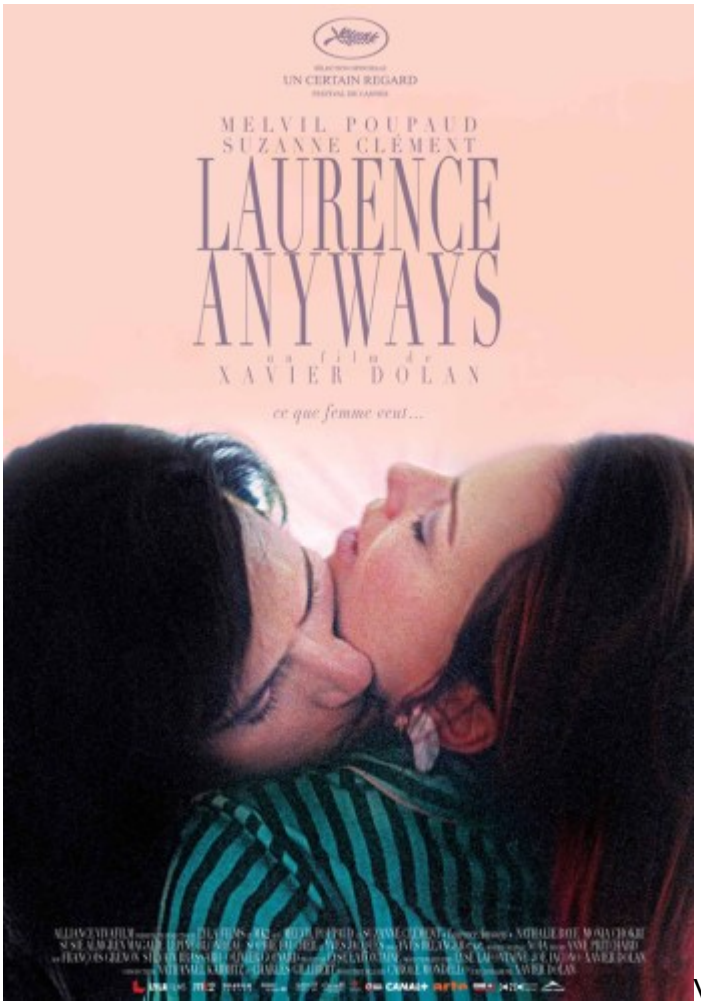
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FILM REVIEW: Laurence Anyways (Dolan, 2012): Canada



Viewed during the Santa Barbara International Film.

Laurence Anyways, is a visual feast as Canadian director, Xavier Dolan, tells a love story between two highly charged individuals, Fred, played by Suzanne Clement a fashionable female film and television

producer, and Laurence, played by Melvil Poupad, an up and coming successful, thirty-something in his own right who has decided he wants to be a woman and that heâ??s always wanted to be a woman. Imagine that!

While definitely viewed as a game-changer Laurenceâ??s decision to become a woman isnâ??t really the central focus of the film despite the amount of attention Dolan provides for it as we see Laurence first few awkward moments and then his full on embodiment and womanly maturation. Nevertheless, the film wouldnâ??t have the soul to evolve without the essence of Fred as his fiance. Despite all the hype about the film being a caricature of a transvestite itâ??s a real love story between Fred and Laurence that takes place over the course of the ten years we are privy to in Mr. Dolanâ??s long tale.girlfriend for this film is really a portrait of their relationship over the course of ten years. They play wonderfully off each other, immediately conjuring intimate undercurrent relationship squabbles, shared amusements, and deep understanding of one another and each ones personal and emotional needs.

Laurence isnâ??t gay per se, yet Fred unequivocally states she wants to be with a man. Respectfully and with tremendous courage both Laurence and Fred try to go with it. Also of interest to note about Laurence â?? his mother, played by Nathalie Baye, hated her son but now loves her daughter. Poupad really seems to capture the very assertive yet conflicted nature of Laurence as he meanders emotionally revealing deep scarring in his psyche. Yet by the end of the film itâ??s become obvious Suzanne Clements has literally stolen the show with her round-robin buildup of intense emotional pandering to the man she so deeply loves and itâ??s her eyes that treat the viewer to Lauranceâ??s transformation.

Undoubtedly, Dolan is establishing himself as a filmmaker and editor of quite some skill, having won awards at Cannes and at Toronto, and here takes on the costume design as well. Granted often said the clothes donâ??t make the man but in *Laurence Anyways,* the costumes illuminate the characters and raise them to a level of such visual delight I would venture to say these costumes help make the characters and assuredly radiate their inner light. In addition, Dolan seems to handle the obvious story beats with a crisp, elegant, and understated style and permeates the screen with an eye for color, pattern, and composition and with a solid dose of fetishism. He also cuts a mean musical score here as well using Beethovenâ??s Fifth Symphony to accompany a superb montage of raw emotion as the causality of the relationship implodes.

The film runs at 2:45 minutes. In my opinion, the story needs a little more brevity. Still, I give it a strong endorsement as it hits a home run with the 80â??s nostalgia, the actorâ??s powerful performance levels, the gorgeous cinematography, and the colorful characters magnified so profoundly by the extraordinary costume design. Highly recommended.

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