

Mon oncle Antoine

1971 104m *director* Claude Jutra, *script* Clément Perron, *producer* Marc Beaudet, *cinematographer* Michel Brault, *editors* Claude Jutra and Claire Boyer, *music* Jean Cousineau; *with* Jean Duceppe, Jacques Gagnon, Hélène Loiselle, Lionel Villeneuve, Olivette Thibault, Claude Jutra and Monique Mercure

Claude Jutra's third feature is considered by many to be the greatest Canadian film of all time. Set in a rural Quebec mining town in the late 1940s, *Mon oncle Antoine* is at once a charming portrait of a mythical rural Quebec and a telling fable of Quebec at the dawn of the Quiet Revolution. This social tension between innocence and experience is given subtle dramatic form in a coming-of-age story about a 15-year-old boy, Benoît (Jacques Gagnon), who works for his uncle (Jean Duceppe), the owner of the local general store and also the town's undertaker. Aided by the excellent cinematography of Michel Brault, we see the world through Benoît's eyes, including his first encounters with sex and death. The climactic scene, in which Benoît rides in a sleigh with his drunken uncle and the body of a dead youth, resonates with Canadian cultural mythology, the snowstorm an indication of the tempestuous winds of change about to come. Because the film's politics are more implicit than obvious, critical response to *Mon oncle Antoine* in Quebec was mixed, although it was successful both at home and abroad, and the winner of eight Canadian Film Awards.

AWARDS: Canadian Film Awards – Feature Film, Director, Screenplay, Cinematography, Actor (Duceppe), Supporting Actress (Thibault), Musical Score, Overall Sound; AV Trust – Masterwork

Barry Keith Grant

