



Producer Marc S. Grenier considers this \$7-million feature to be in a class by itself, even though it has elements of recent films such as *Total Recall*, *DOA* and *Face/Off*. "Many movies have been made about bodies looking for their souls," Grenier says. "The twist in our movie is that it's a soul that's looking for its body. By 2008, there's an invention that changes everything. It's a way of travelling that is offered to the rich and the powerful. Someone goes into a booth, sits on a hard-wired chair, and his or her mind is exchanged with someone else for a day."

In *X Change*, three actors control the same mind. Kim Coates is a corporate vice president of public affairs in New York. Initially he doesn't want to use *Xchange*, but must get to San Francisco in a hurry for a press conference. The only way to make it on time is by using *Xchange* technology. He enters Kyle MacLachlan's body, but soon learns that his own body has been abducted by a terrorist and he can't get back into it. He is forced to leave MacLachlan's body and enter the body of Jeff (played by Stephen Baldwin), a cloned worker who will self destruct in a week. Coates (inside Baldwin) must get back to New York to reclaim his body. Pascale Bussi eres plays a journalist who is investigating this mind-hopping technology and helps Baldwin defeat the terrorist, now played by Coates.

How did Moyle, a director known for making small, deeply personal films, become involved in a sci-fi action adventure project, albeit one with a relatively low budget? "When we were looking for a director, we wanted someone who understood Los Angeles," says co-producer Jean Desormeaux. "The conundrum was that we had an action film. So we married Allan, who is good with actors, with an absolutely brilliant director of photography, Pierre Gill [*The Art of War*], who designed all the action scenes. It was a collaboration made in heaven. Allan rehearsed the actors to death with Pierre Gill to back him up on the action scenes."

Moyle's explanation for taking on *X Change* was somewhat more poetic. "Basically, a psychic told me that I was entering a period where I should do more and think less and not take myself so seriously. Then this movie came along. It's about shamanistic themes that I'm personally interested in. I wouldn't be surprised if the ability to leave your body has already been developed and is in daily use somewhere, perhaps by shamans in the Amazon jungle. Maybe the technology for this [mind exchanging]



concept won't come from the biotech field at all but from the mystical field."

*X Change* is a more commercial venture than Moyle has undertaken up till now, but the director put his own identifiers on the film. "I put in my little 'Moyleisms,' as the critics call them. *X Change* is a genre movie of a type where, if I really had a stamp, it would hardly be action adventure anymore. *X Change* is a hybrid, a marriage of indie spirit and action adventure." A scene in which a couple talks about killing while having sex is "pure Moyle," Desormeaux says. Moyle is pleased about how the film turned out, calling it "a rich little movie, much smarter than your average action adventure. In the future we posit that the government hasn't caught up with this technology. The technology is way ahead, and the politicians are scrambling to regulate it, but they have no clue. People are doing things that may or may not be illegal and they are safely concealed behind someone else's identity. Some feel that they can behave recklessly or shamelessly or even illegally and get away with it."

*X Change* is the first in a series of films Moyle hopes to make in Quebec. He was born in Arvida in 1947, raised in Shawinigan, and attended McGill University for a year, before heading to Los Angeles. "I'm now thinking of spending a couple of years in Quebec," Moyle says. "I'm hoping to bring a big movie here. Now, when I say big, I mean big for me. It's basically a comedy about a woman who's seen the Virgin Mary in her fridge. It's called *Lorraine Loses It*. I might be able to persuade the producers, who right now plan to set the movie in Wisconsin, to move it to Montreal because I'm extremely enthusiastic about the crews here. Following that, I hope to do a few low-budget movies.

"I have so many possible projects in mind. I'm working on one called *How Things Work* and another called *Air, Water, Food, Sex (and Strange Sex)*, the five necessities of life. How's that for a title? Of course, now I have to think of a story that's as good as the title. I have a whole lot of ideas, but I haven't written them all out yet." However, it seems once you've developed a taste for action adventure, it's hard to let go. "Action adventure is great fun," says Moyle, "but I could never have done it without the righteous strength of Pierre Gill, who's done these movies before. He storyboarded the action stuff and I'll get the credit for it," he laughs. "Everyone's saying it's my new career. I'm up for that." ●

From top to bottom: Larry Day with Kyle MacLachlan; Stephen Baldwin and Pascale Bussi eres; Kim Coates; Charles Powell and Baldwin; Allan Moyle with Day and Bussi eres



Pascale Bussi eres as reporter Madeleine in *X Change*

# X CHANGE

# PASCAL BUSSI ERES

## on the Edge of Stardom

By Harvey Chartrand

Pascale Bussi eres is one of Quebec's leading actors, famous as the "queen of the miniseries" in *la belle province*. *X Change* could well be her ticket to U.S. stardom. Bussi eres plays Madeleine, a left-leaning journalist who warns her readers about the dangerous mind-transfer technology. "I think *X Change* asks some good questions about how far technology will go," Bussi eres says. "The film works on many levels. It's an action film with philosophical underpinnings. I personally like the questioning that goes on about the nature of identity."

Bussi eres says she particularly enjoyed working with Moyle, known as an actor's director. "Allan is a space muffin. He's pretty much a wild animal, absolutely enthusiastic, a person who always goes for the new idea. He's very energetic, kind, generous with everybody. And *X Change* was a hard shoot. There were a lot of action stunts and special effects. Allan was like a kid having fun. He's totally weird, but in a good and exciting way. We rehearsed quite a bit and tried some unusual exercises, which he thought would help us with our characters. Allan invited us to experiment with the concept of an identity peeking out from behind another identity - an envelope with something else inside. We worked a lot on this very abstract concept, trying to make it real."

Bussi eres' most memorable experience on the set of *X Change* was "one weird moment when I was shooting with Stephen Baldwin, a scene where he gets his finger cut off by an invisible cord. He had a fake finger that came off, but I wasn't expecting the effect. Nobody told me about it. During the first take, I saw Stephen's finger fall off and I screamed. It was so realistic. But this was just one of Allan's tricks so that I would register complete surprise, although I don't know if that particular take is in the film." Bussi eres remembers that *X Change* was a very physical film, with several fight scenes. "I'm not used to the action genre, but I had a good trainer and I learned fast."



Pascale Pascale



Bussi eres Bussi eres



Bussi eres, born in Montreal in 1968, made her acting debut in 1983 in *Sonatine* for Quebec director Micheline Lanct ot. Lanct ot won a Genie for the film and Bussi eres was nominated for Best Actress. She stayed in school, taking a hiatus from acting, until she reappeared in Jacques Leduc's *La Vie fant me* in 1992. She won the award for Best Actress at the Montreal World Film Festival for that film, a fantasy of a man (Ron Lea) who loves his wife and mistress and manages to live parallel lives with both. Critics said that Bussi eres was "incredible" as the emotionally troubled young mistress who finally accepts her second-place status.

But it was her starring role in *Blanche* in 1993, a television miniseries directed by Charles Binam , that gave Bussi eres her  toile status in Quebec. The sequel to the immensely popular *Les Filles de Caleb*, *Blanche* rocketed Bussi eres into a career of non-stop work in Quebec and France. In 1995, she travelled to Toronto to star in Patricia Rozema's lesbian romance *When Night Is Falling*, which was a hit at the 1996 Berlin Film Festival. That year she also appeared in two Jack Higgins HBO action thrillers - *Thunder Point* and *Windsor Protocol* - both featuring her *Xchange* co-star Kyle MacLachlan and directed by George Mihalka. Steve Ujlaki, a New York City-based executive with HBO saw Bussi eres in *Thunder Point* and was so impressed that he kept her in mind for a future project, which led to her starring role in *Xchange*.

In 1997, Bussi eres turned up as the unattainable love interest Juliana in cult director Guy Maddin's dreamlike *Twilight of the Ice Nymphs*, a romantic fantasy set on the imaginary island of Mandragora, where the sun never sets. "Guy Maddin reminds me of Allan Moyle," Bussi eres observes. "He's got a total poetic energy and he creates an amazing ambience on the set. Everyone wanted to work for him for free. Guy is fascinating, a shy and brilliant man. I remember having some great times with Shelley Duvall and Frank Gorshin. All the sets were made out of papier m ch , created in a Winnipeg studio in the middle of winter. Everything was like a kid's show, but the plot was sophisticated and Shakespearean, very lyrical. Guy even brought over real ostriches and filled the studio with them for scenes set in Duvall's ostrich farm. He created a magic realism in the studio. Just being in Winnipeg in the wintertime shooting that kind of movie was very strange. We also shot our interviews for the documentary *Guy Maddin: Waiting for Twilight* in the studio while *Ice Nymphs* was in production."

Following *Twilight*, Bussi eres appeared in *Platinum* (1997), a television drama about the music business directed by Bruce McDonald, two more films for Binam , *Le C ur au poing* (1997) and *La Beaut  de Pandora* (2000), and the lead in Denis Villeneuve's first feature, *Un 32 ao t sur terre* (1998). She was part of the ensemble cast in Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses* (1999) and played the suicidal mother in L a Pool's *Emporte-moi* (1999). In August of last year, she travelled to France and Denmark to work with director Catherine Corsini in *La R p tition*, a psychological drama co-starring Emmanuelle B art (*Mission Impossible*). It's the story of two lifelong friends, a movie star and a dentist, played by Bussi eres. *La R p tition* isn't so much a thriller, though, as a study of identity diffusion and power struggles in a relationship, Bussi eres says.

With more films set for release in the United States and Europe, Pascale Bussi eres is well on her way to becoming as big a star internationally as she is in her native Quebec. ●

top to bottom:

*Eldorado*, *When Night Is Falling*, *La Beaut  de Pandora*