



## Monday, June 26, 7:30 pm

Reviewed by Mark Kermode | The Observer | Not Rated | 112 Mins.

*In the role of a lifetime, Léa Seydoux plays a widowed single mum caught between new romance and the failing mind of her father in the French director's deeply personal Cannes prize winner.*

The French writer-director Mia Hansen-Løve became a festival fixture with films such as *All Is Forgiven* (2007), *Father of My Children* (2009) and more recently the Palme d'Or nominated *Bergman Island* (2021). My own favourite Hansen-Løve films include the pulsing *Eden* (2014) and the ruminative *Things to Come* (2016), the latter of which contains one of Isabelle Huppert's finest screen performances. But in this, her latest Cannes prize winner, Hansen-Løve hits a career high note, delivering a quietly thoughtful and ultimately life-affirming portrait of the strange interaction between loss and rebirth. It's a miraculous balancing act that pretty much took my breath away.

Léa Seydoux, whose own career encompasses everything from Palme d'Or winners to Bond blockbusters, lands the low-key role of a lifetime as Sandra, a thirtysomething widowed mother with a Jean Seberg *À bout de souffle* crop whose life is pulling in two very different directions. Her philosophy professor father Georg (Pascal Greggory) is suffering from Benson's syndrome, a neurodegenerative condition that is causing his mind, vision and memory to fail. "His entire life was dedicated to thinking," says the clearly distraught Sandra, a professional translator whose ability to intermeditate is crucially failing her, and who increasingly feels "closer to my father with his books than with him". Only his companion, Leïla (Fejria Deliba), seems truly able to reach Georg, who has even closed his mind to the beauty of a once-loved Schubert sonata – a heartbreaking moment.

At the same time, an encounter with old friend Clément (Melvil Poupaud), a "cosmo-chemist" who travels the world collecting space dust, sparks new romance in Sandra's life. It's an illicit affair (Clément is a married father) that reawakens feelings and physical passions she thought she had "forgotten" ("How could this body stay asleep for so long?" he marvels). Meanwhile, Sandra's mother, Françoise (Nicole Garcia), seems to be enjoying a later-life renaissance, eagerly engaging with the modern world by going on nonviolent environmental demonstrations while her ex-husband is confined to care homes.

Yet even Françoise has memory lapses, seemingly erasing thoughts of her previous unhappy marriage (she remembers only her professional life) and in the process throwing the baby out with the bathwater. As Sandra exasperatedly tells her: "It's like you've forgotten everything that happened to us between the ages of nought and 20!"

While all of Hansen-Løve's films have felt deeply personal, she describes *One Fine Morning* (a title that implies an almost fable-like moment of change) as her "most autobiographical" work. Her own father suffered a neurodegenerative condition, and Georg's journey from hospitals to nursing homes, and the attendant anxiety that causes his relatives, is directly inspired by the film-maker's experiences. Indeed, anyone who has witnessed first-hand the disorientating presence/absence duality of caring for a loved one with memory loss, and helplessly struggling to find a safe space for them, will recognise Sandra's quandary of "mourning someone who is still alive."

Politics lurk at the edges of the frame, from a dismissive assessment of the government ("She votes for Macron, then takes down his picture!") to fumbled pleas for assisted dying and a passing reference to schoolkids learning terrorist attack drills. Yet far more powerful is the dramatic catharsis that *One Fine Morning* offers the viewer in its uncommonly tender intermingling of grief, guilt and ecstasy.

Like Huppert in *Things to Come*, Seydoux's performance here is a masterclass in interiority, leading the audience deep into Sandra's bewildering encounters with polar opposite emotions, locked in a form of emotionally Socratic unspoken dialogue. Shooting on 35mm, cinematographer Denis Lenoir conjures a world of deceptively complex light and shade, softening the harsh edges of the medical and care home interiors, blending them with the more obviously lively exteriors in which new days seem to be dawning.

Musical accompaniment is minimal, although the film is significantly bookended by the sounds of Jan Johansson's performance of *Liksom en herdinna* (which featured in Ingmar Bergman's all but disowned 1971 oddity *The Touch*) and Bill Fay's wistfully romantic *Love Will Remain*. Listening to the latter after watching *One Fine Morning* for a second time, I found myself locked in that strange conundrum of crying and smiling simultaneously. It's a bittersweet dichotomy I treasure, and one that this beautiful film evokes perfectly. In French with English subtitles.



**anim8**  
student film festival

Applications are now available for the 2023 Anim8 Student Film Festival, the 20<sup>th</sup> annual event of its kind. Students of all ages are invited to submit their animated films of 8 minutes or less and compete for cash prizes and inclusion of our virtual program. Go to [FilmFreeway \(https://filmfreeway.com/Anim8\)](https://filmfreeway.com/Anim8) for details.

### TIVOLI THEATRE

5021 Highland Avenue | Downers Grove, IL  
630-968-0219 | [www.classiccinemas.com](http://www.classiccinemas.com)  
\$7 After Hours Members | \$11 Non-Members

# OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN

## Monday, July 10, 7:30 pm

Reviewed by Martin Carr | We've Got This Covered | Not Rated | 104 Mins.

Other People's Children is a rom-com from French writer director Rebecca Zlotowski, which will reignite lost loves, seep into the pores of cynics, and convince the Sundance faithful that passion after parenthood need not be a pipe-dream.



Much of that magic trick is effortlessly pulled off on screen by effervescent leading lady Virginie Efira, who plays secondary school teacher Rachel Friedmann. Separated from Paul (Sebastien Pouderoux), her partner of eight years, she meets and begins falling for Ali (Roschdy Zem). He in turn co-parents his daughter Leila (Callie Ferreira-Gonvales) with ex-wife Alice (Chiara Mastroianni), who each take it in turns to pick her up from judo.

They meet through their mutual appreciation for guitar, which they are both trying to learn. Their easy chemistry – combined with a sparkling script from Zlotowski – not only takes the pressure off audiences to emotionally connect, but neatly sidesteps a genre staple as events move effortlessly on. As they drift from one romantic segue to another nothing feels forced, as Ali and Rebecca continue to simply fall in love.

For fans of traditional rom-coms Other People's Children will feel distinctly different, as there is no apparent meet-cute combo, no obstacle to happiness which feels contrived, and ultimately no big payoff which justifies the emotional investment. Together Ali and Rachel are simply finding their way in love, whilst dealing with Leila's initial rejection, and Alice's amicable introduction without missing a beat.

This refreshing approach, which circumvents convention in favor of observational storytelling, means that Other People's Children gets under your skin and stays there. Trials and tribulations which are merged into this deceptively complex narrative, touch on the innate predisposition of women to procreate, as well as addressing that more overtly in a social sense. Headliners Zem and Efira convey these topics seamlessly throughout their respective performances, while Ferreira Goncalves completes the equation by upping the cute factor as Leila.

However, where it really pulls the rug out from under audiences is in its low-key denouement. Rachel and Ali may have disagreements and these may be resolved in a convincing fashion, but the understated conclusion of Other People's Children feels so real it might not be fictitious.

It speaks to parents around the world who have had to make similar choices, when it comes to matters of the heart. From the perspective of a single parent, if a prospective partner is rejected by their children, then the connection they feel is doomed to failure. Similarly, should an emotional upheaval bring parents back together unexpectedly, then those people need to try again for the sake of their little ones.

This might not make for good cinema, or seem particularly dramatic for Hollywood purposes, but in the context of Other People's Children it hits home hard. There is an emotional maturity which comes through in conversations between Rachel and Ali in those latter stages, that resonant far beyond the confines of this fictional world.

In a crucial scene played between Virginie and her young charge there is no sugar coating, as Rachel and Ali decide to part company. Although compassionate, Leila is told the truth from an adult who is trying her best to walk away clean from someone she still loves dearly. There is no subtext, no subterfuge, and no audience manipulation taking place in this moment – just a situation drawn from life delicately conveyed through character.

Other supporting players outside of our central trio include Yame Coutuere as Rachel's sister Louana, as well as Michel Zlotowski who plays patriarch to them both. Each one offers some grounded character contributions, as well as sarcasm in spades to counterbalance any hint of romance which might otherwise overwhelm the story.

In an industry defined by formula, increasingly dictated to by committee, and overseen by bean counters seeking to make as much money as possible – Other People's Children seeks to buck the system. Sticking to storytelling conventions, yet intentionally layering them with more than a modicum of truth, Zlotowski has made something honest.

No tricks, no manipulation, and more importantly no need to over-egg the pudding – this Sundance entry deserves all the attention it can get. In French with English subtitles.

Please enroll me as a member of **THE AFTER HOURS FILM SOCIETY**. This annual membership entitles me to mailings, discounted admissions, and special group benefits.

\$25 Individual     \$45 Family     \$75 Sponsor     \$200 Corporate     \$500 Founder

Make check payable to **THE AFTER HOURS FILM SOCIETY** and send to P.O. Box 5266, Wheaton, Illinois 60189.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  New Member     Renewal

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Preferred: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  E-Mail Newsletter as a PDF

THE AFTER HOURS FILM SOCIETY is a not-for-profit organization. Thank you for your support!

# BLACKBERRY

Monday, July 31, 7:30 pm

Reviewed by Richard Roeper | RogerEbert.com | Not Rated | 122 Mins.

*This is one of those whip-smart, character- and story-driven gems that grabs you from the start and never lets go.*

Three of the most entertaining movies of 2023 have told the origin stories of game-changing innovations from the latter part of the 20th century that left quite the stamp on the popular culture. First there was the breezy Apple TV+ Cold War romp “Tetris,” followed by Ben Affleck’s masterful “Air.” And now comes Matthew Johnson’s wickedly funny and kinetic “BlackBerry,” a classic inventor/underdog tale about that brief and shining era when a handheld device from Canada had millions of us working our thumbs to the bone as we obsessed over that tactile, clicking keyboard. The BlackBerry was so addictive it was dubbed “CrackBerry.” Remember? And then ... not so much.

The difference: Whereas “Tetris” tells us in the closing credits the game has sold more than a half billion copies and remains popular, and “Air” reaches its conclusion when we’re just at the beginning of Nike’s ascent to global domination, “BlackBerry” reminds us in the end title cards, “At its height, BlackBerry controlled 45% of the cell phone market. ... Today, it’s 0%.” You probably know the reason why BlackBerry crashed and burned; if not, you can look it up on your iPhone, ahem.

Thanks to the clever, docudrama style direction by Matt Johnson, a crackling good screenplay by Johnson and Matthew Miller and searingly good performances from the ensemble cast, the scenes where BlackBerry crashes and burns are just as enthralling as the triumphant moments when an unlikely team of ragtag techno geeks based in Waterloo, Ontario, briefly revolutionized the mobile device world. Based on the book “Losing the Signal” by Jacquie McNish and Sean Silcoff and sure to invite comparisons with “The Social Network” and “Glengarry Glen Ross” (a movie that is actually name-dropped by one character), this is one of those whip-smart, character- and story-driven gems that grabs you from the start and never lets go. I can’t wait to watch it again.



Jay Baruchel is an actor sometimes prone to overdoing it with the quirky mannerisms, but he delivers one of the best and most empathetic performances of his career as Mike Lazaridis, the silver-haired, socially awkward co-founder of the Canadian software company Research in Motion (RIM), which in the early 1990s consisted of Mike, his best friend and co-founder, the goofy man-child Douglas Fregin (played by director Johnson), and a handful of

uber-nerds who spent their days soldering together bits and pieces of tech and taking breaks for heated “Star Trek” message board arguments and movie nights.

It’s a savvy but cash-poor operation on the verge of going out of business—until Mike partners up with the ruthless, take-no-prisoners businessman Jim Balsillie (Glenn Howerton), over the strong objections of Doug. Jim is a maniac—breaking phones, screaming at employees, threatening the likes of Palm CEO Carl Yankowski (a fantastic Cary Elwes), wheeling and dealing in ways that draw the attention of the SEC—but for a time, he’s the right maniac for the job.



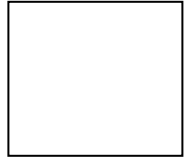
Arguably the best scene in the movie occurs when Jim’s presentation to the Verizon board about a revolutionary new BlackBerry that will handle emails on a whole new level is about to die a quick death—until Mike stumbles in and unveils a cobbled-together prototype that leaves Saul Rubinek’s top exec speechless. Cue the real-life footage of Oprah Winfrey unboxing shiny blue BlackBerrys and proclaiming, “It sends and receives e-mail messages, it is also a cell phone!” as the studio audience erupts as if they’ve won the lottery.

BlackBerry quickly becomes a thing, a huge thing, with Mike gradually morphing into a suit-clad company exec, Doug desperately trying to retain the sense of playfulness and wonder that once permeated the company and Jim taking his bull-in-a-china-shop act on the road, making promises he can’t keep, manufacturing ways to elevate the stock and recruiting top engineers from places such as Google. You can almost sense the trackball scrolling off the rails even as BlackBerry becomes a dominant force in the market and in the popular culture.

With cinematographer Jared Raab shooting in a handheld style that sometimes gives us the feeling of eavesdropping on events from the hallway, “BlackBerry” retains a sense of authenticity even as it embraces the black comedy. For all of Mike’s genius, he’s taken completely by surprise when Steve Jobs unveils the first iPhone (“an iPod, a phone and an Internet communicator ... [in] one device”), and unwisely brushes it off as a silly toy that will never work. He’s also blind to Jim’s increasingly reckless actions and seems incapable, or unwilling, to make tough choices about the company’s future. (Doug might have been the goofy one, but he was also smart enough to see the end coming, and he sold his BlackBerry stock at its height in 2007 and became one of the wealthiest men in Canada.)

In the end, though, “BlackBerry” isn’t a cautionary tale about greed or hubris; it’s the story of someone who executed a great idea and was on top of the game—until someone came up with an even better idea that sent the BlackBerry packing to the back of your junk drawer.

*Please join us for our thought provoking post screening discussions!*



Post Office Box 5266  
Wheaton, IL 60189

Phone: 630.534.4528  
Info@afterhoursfilmsociety.com  
www.afterhoursfilmsociety.com

### AFTER HOURS GOES GREEN!

Now you can receive the latest information  
about AHFS events in your email!

If interested, just send an email  
with your name and email address to:

info@afterhoursfilmsociety.com

and say, "Sign me up!"



"The sweetly affecting tale of a  
Parisian single mom."

—IndieWire

Monday, June 26 at 7:30 pm

"For the incurable romantic and cynic in equal  
measure, this film deserves to be seen by a big  
audience."

—*We've Got This Covered*

Monday, July 10 at 7:30 pm



"Wonderfully funny, suspenseful...Here is a  
business story that has it all."

—Deadline

Monday, July 31 at 7:30 pm