

Document Citation

Title	L'anglaise et le duc
Author(s)	Piers Handling
Source	<i>Toronto International Film Festival</i>
Date	2001
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	69
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	Rohmer, Éric (1920-2010), Nancy, Meurthe-et-Moselle, Lorrain, France
Film Subjects	L'anglaise et le duc (The lady and the Duke), Rohmer, Éric, 2001



L'Anglaise et le duc

The Lady and the Duke

Eric Rohmer

FRANCE, 2001

129 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Pathé Image/**

C.E.R./France 3 Cinéma

Executive Producer: **François Ivernel,**

Romain Le Grand, Leonard Glowinski

Producer: **Françoise Etchegaray**

Screenplay: **Eric Rohmer, adapted from the memoirs of Grace Elliott**

Cinematographer: **Diane Baratier**

Editor: **Mary Stephen**

Production Designer: **Antoine Fontaine**

Sound: **Pascal Ribier**

Principal Cast: **Lucy Russell, Jean-Claude Dreyfus, François Marthouret, Leonard Coblant, Caroline Morin**

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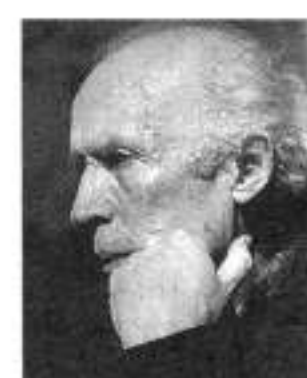
The pattern is now clear for all to see: Having completed one of his renowned cycles of films, Rohmer chooses to catch his breath between each cycle by shooting a period piece – a form of rest for this prolific veteran director. So now, after the completion of the four films in "*Contes des quatre saisons*," Rohmer presents us with his exquisite *L'Anglaise et le duc*. Taken from Grace Elliott's "Memoirs", the setting is the French Revolution as seen through the eyes of a woman who was witness to the events.

Unhappy with both historical novels about the revolution and the films made from those novels, Rohmer decides to employ two distinct strategies: He uses a first-hand account of events, which in his mind is far more "truthful" than any historian's most in-depth research; and, more audaciously, he avoids shooting in external settings, employing digital imaging throughout the film to recreate the city and period in exactitude. As he explains, "the face of Paris has changed so drastically that there is not one line of sight left from revolutionary times."

Grace Elliott was a young Scottish aristocrat who found herself stuck in Paris during the Revolution. The film depicts the subtle relationship between Grace and Philippe "Egalité," Duke of Orléans and cousin of Louis XVI, King of France. Once lovers, the two of them still share a complex and ambiguous friendship which is rendered all the more difficult by the stress of the events that begin to swirl around them.

As in all of his work, loaded conversation (and what it reveals and disguises about the characters) takes the central position in the film. Rohmer effortlessly engages us in the nuances of Grace and the duke's conversations, while leading us towards the different fates which await the participants of this historic and momentous occasion.

■ **Piers Handling**



Eric Rohmer was born in Nancy, France in 1920. He began making short films in the fifties and is well-known for his highly astute film criticism. He established himself as a master filmmaker with his acclaimed feature *Ma nuit chez Maude* (69). He makes many of his

films as portions of cycles, such as "*Six contes moraux*" or the more recent "*Contes des quatre saisons*" although each film is sufficient unto itself. Selected filmography: *Le Signe du lion* (59), *La Collectionneuse* (67), *Le Genou de Claire* (70), *L'Amour l'après midi* (72), *La Femme de l'aviateur* (80), *Pauline à la plage* (82), *Le Rayon vert* (85), *Conte de printemps* (90), *Conte d'hiver* (92), *Rendez-vous à Paris* (95), *Conte d'été* (96), *Conte d'automne* (98) and *L'Anglaise et le duc* (01).

Associated with *European Film Promotion*, an initiative supported by the European Union's MEDIA Programme.

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