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L'ANNEE JULIETTE

(FRENCH)

An MKL release (in France) for Lazenec Diffusion of a Les Prods. Lazenec production, in association with France 2 Cinema and Glem Films, with participation of Canal Plus and Cofimage 4. Produced by Alain Rocca.

Directed by Philippe Le Guay. Screenplay, Le Guay, Jean-Louis Richard, Brigitte Rouan. Camera (color), Pierre Novion; editor, Denise de Casabianca; music, Caroline Petit; art direction, Jimmy Van Steenkiste; costume design, Anne Schotte; sound, Francois Waledisch, Laurent Dreyer; associate producers, Adeline Lecallier, Christophe Rossignon. Reviewed at Gaumont Ambassade, Paris, March 23, 1995. Running time: **85 MIN.**

Camille Prader	Fabrice Luchini
Stephanie	Philippine Leroy Beaulieu
Clementine	Valerie Stroh
Magali	Marine Delterme
Brett	Didier Flamand

A clever idea about a lothario whose life is taken over by a lover of his own invention, "L'Annee Juliette" is a pleasant enough time-waster but squanders its potential with an over-loose script that too often shows its holes. This showcase for the hang-dog charm of comic Fabrice Luchini doesn't look to score much action outside mainland Europe.

Luchini plays Camille, an anesthetist in a Bordeaux hospital whose bedside manner works wonders both professionally and privately. At a conference out of town, he casually leaps in the sack with the sassy Stephanie (Philippine Leroy Beaulieu).

At the airport back home, Camille mistakenly picks up the suitcase of a concert flautist, Juliette Graveur. Discovering the error at his apartment, he wards off the attentions of the clinging Clementine (Valerie Stroh) by pretending Juliette is his lover.

Intrigued, Camille sets out to discover what Juliette looks like. He tries to track her down at a concert but finds she's mysteriously disappeared. Increasingly obsessed by the mystery woman, and still pursued by Clementine, he invents a fictional relationship with the missing musician, even filling his apartment with femme apparel. When Stephanie shows up in Bordeaux, and Juliette's body is later discovered by the cops, the misunder-

standings multiply.

With a little more thought and a few more rewrites, pic could have been turned into a pacey romantic comedy. As it stands, however, the movie veers from one idea or character to another without ever developing a strand to its logical conclusion. Forest of subplots includes a pair of cops searching for the missing musician; a beautiful young patient (Marine Delterme) who later repays Camille for his bedside understanding; and Clementine's cuckolded male partner.

Most gaping plot hole is that it would be easy for Camille to find out what Juliette looked like if he really tried. As a smokescreen to this, pic invents plenty of physical shtick for Luchini (buying women's clothing; running from pillar to post) and pads out the running time with hospital scenes in which he and a colleague engage in man talk.

Leroy Beaulieu is good and assured in the underwritten role of Luchini's latest squeeze, though it is Delterme, as Luchini's kindhearted, indebted patient, who etches the most sympathetic performance. Tech credits are functional, with Mozart's flute concerto raided for background music.

—Derek Elley

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