



presents

City Park

A Little Music for the Soul

A Film by Carole Laganière
Produced by Nathalie Barton



City Park, A Little Music for the Soul is the story of a park and the lives that inhabit it, a portrait of a place where people feel fully alive and less alone, a place that speaks, listens and consoles.

PRESS KIT

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Synopsis

Lafontaine Park is the lung of Montréal, one that also lets the spirit breathe. It is the countryside, gentle and soothing, for those who have none. It is a gathering place, brimming with life, where people feel less lonely.

A man comes to commune with Krishna on his little keyboard, another to declare his love to the trees. A woman writes of joy and heartbreak, another cannot walk but dreams of teaching the ducks to fly. A veritable community where philosopher-kings jog beside teenage sociologists, a world peopled with musicians who improvise, sing Prévert songs, sing life itself.

Lafontaine Park is that attentive ear, the pat on the shoulder, a voice. A place that speaks, listens and consoles. Filmed over four seasons, *City Park, A Little Music for the Soul* is a poetic essay that conveys the music of the park and of those who frequent it.

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Quebec – Canada, 2006, Digital Video, Color, Dolby Surround, 52 min.

Written and Directed by
Research

Carole Laganière
Vincent Audet-Nadeau

Photography
Steadycam Operator
Additional Photography

Carole Laganière
Philippe Lavalette
Gilles Fillion
François Vincelette
Ève Lamont
Gilles Fillion

Sound Recording
Edited by
Sound Editing

Richard Lavoie
France Pilon
Alain Blais
Michael Binette
Martin Messier

Sound Mix
Theme Song *Parc Lafontaine*
Written and Performed by
Original Music
Assistant-Director
Production Manager
Produced by

Fred Cotton
Christian Clermont
Ian Oliveri
Catherine Drolet
Nathalie Barton

Produced by
InformAction

with the participation of

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Characters

Daniel Guernon comes to the park in search of the harmony he has been lacking all his life. An ex-alcoholic, he loves nothing so much as to come greet the trees and watch the children play.

Spiritual musician **Stéphane Malo** has no social life outside the park. Whether singing Hare Krishna or Prévert, alone or accompanied, he follows only one rule: to be fully present in the beauty of the park.

Jogger **Michel-Julien Barrette** doesn't like the labels hanging from the *ad hoc* outfits of his fellow joggers. Running, to him, is childhood regained; it is a tour of the human world – and that of his fiancée.

Odette St-Jacques, the woman with the floral bicycle, comes every day to write. Moments full of little joys and great hopes.

Sylvie Simard has many “grandchildren”, descended from Colombine and Gédéon: adorable ducks she adopted five years ago and that come back every year to gorge on the corn and oatmeal she gives them.

Florence Fazio-Duval has a degenerative disease and lives in a long-term-care facility. But she has her husband, **Francesco**, who spends the afternoon with her. In silence, still in love, they watch the children swim.

Jean-Louis Guay, a former member of the Accueil Bonneau choir, writes love songs for those who have lost everything. And he spends time in the park listening to people who are alone in the world.

To anyone looking for a guide: thirteen-year-old **François-Olivier Tessier-Brasseur** knows the park like the back of his hand.

It's the park's more shadowy corners that **Éric Lapalme** knows intimately. A young gay man new to Montréal discovers the joys of sex in the great outdoors.

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Director's Statement

The Moon and the Violin evoked the importance of the sense of belonging on stage. *Country* focused particularly on people who, at country music festivals, feel like part of a family. In the same vein, *City Park, A Little Music for the Soul*, portrays people who frequent Lafontaine Park to feel supported and together. That was my case when I was a teenager: I went there when I felt alone in the world, misunderstood. The life emanating from the park intoxicated me, helped me dissolve that little knot in my gut. Still today, when nothing's going right, that's where I spontaneously go. The trees do me good. I love lying on the ground inhaling the scent of the grass, watching the play of sunlight through leaves, gazing into the luminescent ripples of the pond. Not to mention the people – juggling, making music, skating, making the park a living place. These beings comfort and reassure me. They give me the impression I'm part of a whole.

I found the same happiness among the people I met. Everyone has their space, their preferred terrain. Everyone finds there that unique little tune that helps them get through the day. Lafontaine Park is something magical, certainly, but here we get to know it by approaching people who have suffered and who suffer still. These elements strike contrast. They reveal a place not just of peace and laughter, but of tears and grief. A vibrant place, humming with counterpoint, that reflects the nameless human beings one comes across without thinking twice.

City Park, A Little Music for the Soul, is the portrait of a public space permeated with individual realities, an incursion of country into city. It is a stroll through a unique place, where footpaths and life journeys intersect.

Carole Laganière

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Bio-Filmography of the Director

Carole Laganière was born in Montreal. In 1987, she graduated in Film Direction from the INSAS, Belgium. In 1989, she made her first short, *Jour de Congé*, who won a number of prizes in Europe. On her return to Québec, she directed *Aline*, which received the Best Feature Film prize at the 1992 Festival de Namur. Happy forays into the genre of documentary-fiction (*Histoires de Musées*, 1996-97, *Des Mots Voyageurs*, 1999), led the filmmaker to choose, with *The Fiancée of Life* (2001) and *The Moon and the Violin* (2003), to focus on reality. The latter both won the Gold Award for Best Canadian Documentary at Hot Docs (Toronto) respectively in 2002 and 2003.

She directed in 2004 a documentary about children in East Montreal, *East End Kids*. The film, selected in more than a dozen of international festivals, was nominated for Best Documentary at the Prix Jutra and the Prix Gémeaux 2005.

Les Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal presented a retrospective of her work in 2005, as well as her previous feature, *Country*.