



Monday, April 16, 2012

MOVIES

NOW PLAYING

A GORGEOUS GIRL LIKE ME

The title character of this bumptious erotic comedy, from 1972, is the wildest of François Truffaut's wild children—an abused young girl who quickly learns an amoral repertoire of survival tactics that lead her to a life of crime. Jailed on murder charges, Camille (Bernadette Lafont) is visited by a sociologist (André Dussollier) doing research for his book on female criminals and tries to catch him in her seductive web. Truffaut plays up the story's ambiguities through a dazzling multitude of styles and allusions, including an elaborate film-noir flashback structure, a series of references to "Vertigo" (including a brilliant bell-tower sequence), a Hawksian setup of a scientist loosening up, and a batch of unstrung performances à la Jerry Lewis. The picaresque adventure involves a sleazy lounge singer (Guy Marchand), an exterminator and forty-year-old virgin (Charles Denner), a predatory lawyer (Claude Brasseur), and a wet noodle of a husband (Philippe Léotard), who are all part of Truffaut's gallery of dubious masculinity ripe for the plucking. Lafont's exuberant embodiment of gleeful feminine ferocity cuts cleverly against Truffaut's grim vision of a world that both represses and craves it, and the antic comedy serves as a mask for an endless round of victimhood. In French.—*Richard Brody* (French Institute Alliance Française; April 17.)

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—The films of Bernadette Lafont. April 17 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "A Gorgeous Girl Like Me" (†) and "The Mischief Makers" (1957, François Truffaut; in French). The 7 P.M. screening will be followed by a Q. & A. with Lafont.