



GAINSBOURG: A HEROIC LIFE

Directed and Written by Joann Sfar

Starring Eric Elmosnino, Laetitia Casta, Anna Moulalis, Lucy Gordon

Produced by Marc du Pontavice and Didier Lupfer

César Awards 2011

Winner: Best First Film – Joann Sfar

Winner: Best Actor – Eric Elmosnino

Official Selection - 2011

Palm Springs International Film Festival

Seattle International Film Festival

Tribeca Film Festival 2010

Winner: Best Actor – Eric Elmosnino

COLCOA Film Festival 2010

Special Mention by Jury for his Performance – Eric Elmosnino

Press information available at: <http://www.musicboxfilms.com/gainsbourg>

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SYNOPSIS

Once upon a time, a young boy, Lucien, walked up and down the streets of Paris, proudly showing off the abominable yellow star pinned to his jacket.

It's 1941.

When this child of Russian-Jewish parents with a cheeky sparkle in his eyes crosses paths with the pro-Nazi French militia, he starts singing *The Marseillaise* anthem alongside them... even though he doesn't quite know the words.

Then something stops young Lucien short – anti-Semitic propaganda featuring a caricature of a Jew. It's an ugly face that resembles him a bit too closely. A face pinned up to be seen and scorned by all.

He wants to run away or erase the grotesque face but does neither. The caricature suddenly comes to life, pops out of the wall and starts to follow the boy. From that point on, the ugly face will never leave his side. It will be his shadow, his curse, his inspiration, his only companion, his alter ego.

Though he doesn't know it yet, little Lucien will one day be known as Serge Gainsbourg.

This tale recounts the life of a hero. It's about a young boy who goes around occupied Paris spouting out words as though he were putting flowers in a gun barrel. Forty years later, he provokes a major upheaval at a concert in Strasbourg where he is supposed to sing a Jamaican reggae version of *The Marseillaise*. The concert hall is sacked by the military, and the black musicians don't even dare to come on stage. Gainsbourg became a true legend by winning over France with his subversive wit.

It's a tale of conquest. A passionate lover despite his awkward face, Gainsbourg lures the mythic Brigitte Bardot into his bed. He seduces Jane Birkin while taking a swim in his French flag underpants and convinces Juliette Greco to waltz with him barefoot in the wee hours of the morning. These legendary women all, without exception, sing the poetic insanities he writes for them.

It's a tale of duels. The most deadly of them pitting Gainsbourg against his alter ego, Ugly Face, a bony, feline man/marionette who jealously watches over his love affairs and reminds him of his repressed humiliations whenever he is at the brink of happiness. Ugly Face is a cunning jester, always present to help and hinder the creative process, haunting the poet/singer's nights and never granting him peace of mind.

It's a tale in which Gainsbourg evolves from being a starving painter to the master of the French pop song. His music grabs the narrative reins, transforming a plump wife into a *Hippopotame* (a lady hippopotamus) and an adulterous and passionate evening into a worldwide hit, *Je t'aime, moi non plus* (I love you, neither do I). And so to tell the story of this master of provocation, this manipulator of words and women, of this shy but avid adventurer, let's swap straight talk for wild rhymes and prepare to dive into the Paris of the swinging sixties to take part in a story as audacious as the risks that made little Lucien... Serge Gainsbourg.

A Note from the Producers

Several years ago, we met a man of enormous talent, probably the most talented and respected comic book artist of his generation: Joann Sfar. But Joann is much more than a comic book artist. He is a born storyteller, a visual artist but also a talented musician. And this is why we so firmly believed in his successful mutation into cinema. Amongst the many artistic references that we have in common, there is one for which we share a passion on so many different levels: the life and the music of Serge Gainsbourg. Not so much Gainsbourg the *provocateur*, but Gainsbourg the musician, the artistic icon, the creator, the Pygmalion, the artist of a hundred talents, and in particular, the Gainsbourg of the first 40 years of his life, so productive and yet much less known.

The film is much more than a simple “biopic.” We wanted to make an almost expressionistic film, with an atmosphere that is the exact opposite of a reconstitution of the facts; it is meant to be a vibrant counterpoint, the essence of Gainsbourg’s creative ambition. We believe this is the only way to truly understand and do justice to his complex personality - always adapting and evolving - and his pictorial and musical mind.

Joann wanted to make a film that goes well beyond the simplistic version of the media, and draws us closer to Gainsbourg’s own broader vision. Like Gainsbourg, Joann is a man of words, images and musical notes. Which is why we believe so strongly in the Gainsbourg project, the encounter between these two artists and their work.

Marc du Pontavice & Didier Lupfer

A Note from Writer-Director Joann Sfar

Certain artists choose their masters in the same discipline they have chosen. Not me. My master has always been Gainsbourg. And since I didn’t want to offend him by helplessly attempting to become a singer, I became a cartoonist.

I left the south of France (Nice) for Paris with one goal in mind: to meet Serge Gainsbourg. I figured that since I adored him, he would naturally adore me too. I originally wanted to do a comic book based on one of Gainsbourg’s novels, *Evgueni Sokolov*. A month after I moved to Paris, Gainsbourg died.

Great Jewish painters, folk musicians from Eastern Europe - all of my graphic novels have one way or another led me down Gainsbourg’s path. My film is very faithful to his life, but it is not a biopic. It’s a real narrative. Paris is like a character in the film. We discover all sorts of nooks and underground worlds as we follow Gainsbourg’s footsteps.

There is no pornography, indecencies or obscenities in my film, but a lot of vulnerable characters who seem to communicate - mainly horizontally - in bed. I don’t want my film to hurt anyone. I want Gainsbourg’s heirs to be proud of it. Its guiding principle is that it’s ultimately the story of a great poet. Gainsbourg always tested the limits, but only a fool would believe cynicism was the motive behind his actions. This is the story of a timid and self-conscious man who protects himself as best he can.

This hero’s life is epic. We should feel the Russian blood coursing through the story’s veins. There are no original recordings of Gainsbourg’s songs. No jazzy or kitschy film soundtrack. Everything was to be re-done, re-worked, re-sung, and become larger than life. Original tracks won’t be artificially superimposed on new images. The voice, music, and image should all be

in harmony.

From his early year as a painter to his later career in music, Gainsbourg exhibited an extreme and yet restrained romanticism. He did everything with delicacy. But every so often, he would jump up and pursue something aggressively. We see how much it took out of him to write songs and have to defend them and himself each time he recorded a new album. Gainsbourg had the courage to write what youth was looking for. He is the most classical and modern of songwriters. He reaches incredible heights in his songwriting immediately followed by lows during publicity stints on TV. Every artist experiences the sadness of trying to be funny or likable in front of an audience, when in fact all he wants is an intelligent ear, a friendly smile, and welcoming arms.

Gainsbourg deeply moves me with his courage and his extreme vulnerability. I love the sound his white Repetto shoes make on the floor when he walks. I love the way he doesn't wear socks even when it's cold outside. I love his obsession with cinema, drawing and painting. I love that he gets angry because he cannot achieve the same heights in these graphic languages that he does in his music.

Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life is not a historical or anecdotal film. It aspires to recount a modern myth because the figure of Gainsbourg is radically modern. No book or movie has ever delved into his heroic qualities. There is no one more Christ-like, nor Jewish nor Russian than Gainsbourg.

I obviously know Gainsbourg's "real life" like the back of my hand, but I did not want to make a "realistic" or "documentary-like" film. I wanted to create something more like a Russian fable, a modern legend. Those who have read my comic books, *The Rabbi's Cat*, *Pascin* or *Klezmer*, will find all of my usual obsessions in my Gainsbourg: love as a remedy to everything, the tragedy and absurdity of Slavic poets, omnipresent irony and supernatural creatures straight out of a Chagall painting.

Serge Gainsbourg created a character for himself. I don't want to go around delving into his personal life to discover who he really was. I couldn't care less about the truth. I love Gainsbourg too much to bring him back to the realms of reality.

I wanted to make a film full of lies because I love lies. This is how I go about creating a modest and self-reflexive work: lying, always lying. I always do a great deal of documentary research beforehand and then purposefully forget half of what I learned. Then I take my subject and make him into a legendary hero. There have been trashy, poppy and sex-obsessed representations of Gainsbourg. Mine will be Russian, a hero right out of Isaac Babel, Gogol or Dostoyevsky.

I would also like this film to address a foreign audience that may not be as familiar with Gainsbourg. Those who experience the film should not only see an extraordinary destiny unveiled, but also witness a modern archetype. I believe that Gainsbourg is more heroic than Superman, in the sense that the Greeks understood it, because a hero is someone who suffers and gets knocked down, but will still grab burning coals with his bare hands. A real hero is one who offers his audience chunks of scalding, molten lava, like Prometheus did.

I am entirely aware of the load I carry on my shoulders, but I love carrying loads that are too heavy to take on.

Joann Sfar

About Serge Gainsbourg's Musical Journey
Bio Translated from the Universal Music (France) web site

Paris - Left Bank

Born into a family of Russian Jewish emigrants that settled in Paris in 1921, Lucien Ginsburg was raised in the religion of the arts, especially that of classical music which his father, a music-hall pianist, played at home for hours at a time. After the war, spent under the fear of exile for those who were marked by the yellow star, he wanted to become a painter, but out of material necessity and because of paternal impetus, ended up in cabarets, working as a guitarist-pianist.

In 1954, with the beginning of the summer seasons at Chez Flavio in Le Touquet and of the nights at Milord l'Arsouille, Lucien Ginsburg registers his first songs with the SACEM (French songwriters' unions). Beginning in 1957, he will do so under the name Serge Gainsbourg and they will be performed by its owner, Michèle Arnaud. In 1958, the owner of the Milord, Francis Claude, invites him to make his first appearance on stage. Spotted by the Philips label, he starts to make studio recordings and begins his fruitful collaboration with Alain Goraguer, who was already Boris Vian's arranger. Following his first success with « *Le poinçonneur des Lilas* » (*The ticket-puncher/inspector of Lilas*), he really enters the profession, goes on tour with Jacques Brel and, championed by Boris Vian, meets Juliette Gréco—a collaboration that will last during this entire “left bank” period begins, the high point of which will be « *La Javanaise* », in the fall of 1962.

Yé-Yé Successes

Albums and tours follow one another. On stage, his arrogant hypersensitivity and his peculiar physical appearance often trigger reactions of rejection. Backstage, however, he is already an assiduous explorer of the feminine continent, from which he will draw some of his best lyrics. But his style--literary, dark and exacting--begins to date; the era of cabarets has past. Gainsbourg displays a penchant for the avant-garde and jazz on the album *Confidentiel* (1963), then for exotic rhythms in *Gainsbourg Percussions* (64)-- change is here, but not success. The latter, almost premeditated, will come with his collaboration with the singer France Gall and « *Poupée de cire, poupée de son* » (*Doll of wax, Doll of bran*) which wins the 1965 Eurovision contest. The projection of Gainsbourg's double entendre lyrics on France Gall's child-like appearance creates an off-beat image (Lolita is already there), the height of which will be attained in 1966 with « *Les sucettes* ». (*The lollipops*).

Money, new performers, a new era-- most certainly more mature, more intense and more creative. It's the era of pop music and of comic strips, the Beatles are dominating the planet and Serge is multiplying his appearances on TV, especially on Distel's Sacha Show. With Michel Colombier, his new arranger, Serge will perfectly capture the era's impulse and seek out the sound of British pop music in the heart of *Swinging London*. Of particular note are, amongst others, « *Comic Strip* » (1967), mixed by Georgio Gomelski, the sound track of the film *Le Pacha* -- a real sampling beat before its time (1968) – and *Elisa* (1969). In 1968, an event will overwhelm and transcend his output: his brief but intense love affair with Brigitte Bardot, a world star at the time. There is the release of « *Bonnie and Clyde* », the recording of « *Je t'aime moi non plus* » (*I love you...Me neither*) just before their break-up (a song the release of which will be blocked by Bardot out of fear for her career), and finally the Baudelairian and baroque tribute of « *Initials B.B.* ».

The Birkin Years

On the set of *Slogan*, another encounter takes place: Jane Birkin—a British and a very young mother already separated from her first husband, John Barry. Gainsbourg will become her Pygmalion. The re-recorded release with Jane of « *Je t'aime moi non plus* » will once more create a scandal and become a world hit. In 1971, he releases the avant-gardist *Histoire de Melody Nelson* (*The History of Melody Nelson*), the fruit of his collaboration with Jean-Claude Vannier. It is a baroque and symbolic masterpiece, which combines the most successful pop music and classical orchestrations.

Up until *L'Homme à Tête de Chou* (*The Man with the Cabbage Head*) in 1976, and with the exception of *Vu de l'Extérieur* (*Exterior View*) (1973), Gainsbourg will explore this vein of the concept-album, notably with *Rock Around the Bunker*, a provocative settling of scores with his war years and an album that is still unjustly avoided today. It is followed by a series of very commercial summer hits, from « *L'ami caouette* » (1975) to « *Sea Sex and Sun* » (1978).

Out of sync once again with the spirit of the times (punks have descended en masse in the meantime), he reappears on stage with a collaboration with the group Bijou, then finds a new vein that will make him be in tune with his era once again, and now more so than ever before: reggae. He records two albums in Kingston with Robbie Shakespeare and Sly Dunbar, *Aux Armes et caetera* (*Take up Arms, Etcetera*) (1979) then *Mauvaises Nouvelles des Etoiles* (*Bad News of the Stars*) (1981). The success is tremendous and overlaid with polemics related to his cover version of the French national anthem *The Marseillaise*.

Gainsbarre

But in 1980, Gainsbourg-Birkin is over and these albums introduce a new character: Gainsbarre (« *Ecce homo* »)—self-destructive and vulgar. Gainsbourg has found his ultimate shell; from now on, his hypersensitivity will be hidden under media provocations. For his last two albums, *Love on the Beat* (1984) and *You're Under Arrest* (1987), Gainsbarre will once again know how to make good use of the era's funk-rock reference points, but repetition does not lurk very far. More memorable was young people's extraordinary infatuation for his concerts, which reached emotional heights once again, moved as he was by their welcome.

Gainsbourg died on March 2, 1991 of cardiac arrest, at the age of 62, “killed by Gainsbarre who took revenge for having been created by him” (Charles Trénet). The successful collaborations created during his lifetime are innumerable. The 90s will see his influence increase further still, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world. His genius for evoking fleeting emotions, his surprising mastery in the use of the very best in popular music that underlie them, make him one of the seminal composers of 20th century French song.

Interview with Composer Olivier Daviaud

How did you approach the music in this film?

With humility: this is the first time I have worked on a film soundtrack. It's a film about Gainsbourg and I had to immerse myself in Joann's brand of poetry. He wanted to stay faithful to Serge, while reinventing him at the same time. There are more than 60 musical clips in the film, which left me quite a bit of scope. I re-appropriated Gainsbourg's songs, as well as composed supplementary music into which I injected elements from Gainsbourg's

music.

How did you free yourself from the weight of Gainsbourg's iconic status?

I did things my way, while trying to achieve a certain universality. Most importantly, I put myself at the service of Joann's script. It is a story and I had to come up with a soundtrack to accompany this story, rather than trying to compose a soundtrack for musicians or for Gainsbourg fans. It's a gamble – I know that it won't win everybody over.

Where did you find your inspiration?

In the song « *Initials B. B.* », Gainsbourg used the first movement from *The New World Symphony* by Dvořák. As a reference to this, I used the beginning of *The New World Symphony* before going into « *Initials B. B.* » in the scene in which Gainsbourg and Brigitte Bardot break up. It's a knowing wink to Gainsbourg connoisseurs, but at the same time, it corresponds to the emotions conveyed in the scene. Gainsbourg was very much influenced by classical composers such as Beethoven, Brahms and Chopin. So in the film, there's a Chopin prelude, Brahms' *Third Symphony* – which Gainsbourg used in « *Baby Alone in Babylone* » – and a piece by Beethoven which inspired « *Marilou.* »

Which songs are the most faithful to the originals?

« *Je t'aime... Moi non plus.* » We used Gainsbourg's version. Along with « *Valse de Melody,* » it's one of the rare moments where we use the original version. However, I did reinforce the sound of the strings – we went to Sofia in Bulgaria to record a string orchestra, who recreated the string part from the original song.

Why did you choose Dionysos, Emily Loizeau and Nosfell to cover some songs?

I wanted certain pieces to have a strong identity. In « *Nazi Rock,* » I wanted a rock 'n' roll band that could create a sense of uneasiness, and I found this in Dionysos. For « *Love on the Beat,* » I needed a human beatbox – noises, shouts, miaouing – that would convey more violence than Bambou's version of the song. Nosfell ticked all the boxes. As for « *Aux armes et caetera,* » I asked K2R Riddim – in my opinion, the best reggae rhythm section in France – and Tyrone Downie, Bob Marley's keyboardist, to accompany me to give the piece a reggae tonality without mimicking Gainsbourg's version. For « *Qui est "in," qui est "out,"* » (*Who is in, Who is out*) I called on Emily Loizeau and Jeanne Cherhal. We wanted something crazy, something amusing, and to give the impression of rowdy teenagers with the voices of established singers. The musicians of *Zone libre* were brought in for « *L'Hôtel particulier* » (*The Townhouse*), because we wanted pure and hard rock and an earthy sonority to emphasize the violent heart attack scene. Gonzales played two-thirds of Gainsbourg's piano pieces - he has a unique touch and we really needed someone good for the instrumental pieces. However, the hands playing the piano onscreen are mine.

What did you expect from the cast?

I expected them to sing as though it came naturally to them. We didn't want them to lip-sync to the original tracks or to have a singer dub their voices. We wanted it to look realistic and natural. The key to this was Eric Elmosnino. In the same way that he had to become Gainsbourg without imitating him, he had to sing in the way that Gainsbourg did without aping him. Fortunately, Eric is an excellent singer, a fact even he didn't know until he started taking lessons. So we knew from the beginning that we were safe. We had a Plan B in case he

really couldn't sing, which was always going to be a possibility, but the film wouldn't have turned out the same. We had him work on five songs, and we listened to him at the end of three weeks. He wasn't necessarily very much like Gainsbourg, but he evoked such incredible emotion – his voice gave us goosebumps. All the other actors – Laetitia Casta, Sara Forestier, Anna Mouglalis, Lucy Gordon, Philippe Duquesne, Yolande Moreau and little Kacey who played the young Gainsbourg – also managed to achieve this realism, which means that the audience don't question what we see onscreen.

How did you adapt to the vocal capabilities of the cast?

Quite easily because they are all quiet talented. I had to lower the key of « *Antoine le casseur*, » a track that Gainsbourg never released, for Philippe Duquesne, because he had a lower voice than I expected. I had a little scare with Anna Mouglalis, because I thought that the duo « *La Javanaise* » would be in a key too low for her voice, but it turns out that she actually has a sublime voice in the lower range. Laetitia was quite like Bardot, so I didn't really have to do anything there. We only rehearsed « *Bonnie and Clyde* » in a studio because the song was interspersed with dialogue, so we had to work on acting and singing at the same time so that this flowed.

Which songs were performed live during the filming?

« *Le Canari est sur le balcon*, » (*The Canary is on the balcony*) which Lucy sang live on stage. She had a very sweet voice, so it was a nice little moment during filming. I was playing the piano for « *Bonnie and Clyde* » behind the set: Laetitia and Eric had the music played for them through earpieces, and I had to watch what they were doing on a monitor to get the timing right. However, most of the songs were recorded in advance, because the conditions on set were too difficult for us to record live every time. It took a few days to get each song perfect. So they were lip-syncing during filming, but to their own voices.

Interview with Production Designer Christian Martí

What instructions did Joann Sfar give you for set design?

At first, nothing in particular. He gave me Russian paintings and films like Murnau's *Nosferatu*, Carné's *The Children of Paradise* and Fellini's *Amarcord* as points of reference. On my part, I also watched expressionist films, I watched and re-watched Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, I looked for inspiration in collages by Jacques Prévert, and most important, from Gainsbourg's lyrics. We began by looking for a general concept which we could apply to all the sets, although we weren't completely agreed on the set design until we sat down with each other to discuss it – Joann wanted a minimalist and rather monochrome film. So I started working with Christian Gambiasi, the head decorator, to come up with a palette of colors which matched the paintings given to me. Joann drew storyboards from the viewpoints that he wanted, and I worked on making the set according to these drawings. He repeatedly told me and director of photography Guillaume Schiffman, that he trusted us because he didn't have any previous experience in film.

What did you pay the most attention to?

The film wasn't meant to be a straightforward reconstitution. Each object, each color had to represent a period in Gainsbourg's and his state of mind. I had to take great care not to let what we had chosen to recount of Gainsbourg's universe become a soulless anecdote. We had

to become intimate with him.

Which parts of the set design are completely from your imagination?

The attic that Gainsbourg used as a studio. We built it and invented all the rooms in the Éclair Studios in Épinay-sur-Seine. That set was meant to be the backdrop to a tumultuous event in Serge Gainsbourg's life: it was there that he decided to give up painting and to burn all his paintings. He never did burn his works in real life. Joann did some watercolor paintings, which we enlarged and repainted onto canvasses. We then made around ten copies of each, as we did with all the furniture and accessories, so that we could film the fire scene several times. With Claude Vincent, the head set builder, we did trials and chose materials that were able to resist the flames for long enough to assure the safety of the cast and crew.

Which was the period of Gainsbourg's life that required the most research on your part?

The years of his first marriage. We did a lot of research, but found very little information on this period of his life. He never talked about it in any interview, and he only had a couple of photos from the bourgeois life he led during those years.

Which are the parts that are historically correct?

The most detailed research was on the musical instruments. Each of them had a sonority that went hand in hand with their design, and they had to express richness or poverty. Jean-Philippe Reverdot, our Prop Master, spent several months looking for the instruments, which appeared in the film one by one, and when he didn't find them, we had them made according to archival documents. For other accessories, we knew that Gainsbourg was obsessive, almost to the point of fetishism. So we studied every documentary, every film and every photo, and set designers Isabelle Girard and Françoise Doré hunted down these items assiduously. Again, whatever they couldn't find were made specially.

What was your source of inspiration for Dali's bedroom?

We actually had all the information we needed about the décor from an interview that Gainsbourg did. He described how the drawings of masters were just scattered on the floor, and he said that the black astrakhan-covered walls made quite an impression on him. Because Dali was a megalomaniac, we imagined that he was living in one of his paintings. Valentina Laroca, our set decorator, created paintings in the style of the painters Gainsbourg mentioned, and our sculptor Arnaud Beauté reproduced objects that were in Dali's paintings in bulk. All of this was installed at the Royaumont Abbey and a large part of the walls were covered in black astrakhan fabric, but we left the gothic pillars because we felt that they conveyed Dali's baroque side.

What are the key elements to his townhouse on rue de Verneuil?

After visiting Dali's house, Serge was impressed by the black walls and he applied the same concept to his townhouse. We chose, as meticulously as he would have done, a black with texture, and settled on a beautiful watered silk so that the black would have a certain depth. Black is a rather immaterial color, almost invisible, and here it creates a luxurious setting. It is the luxurious backdrop for Gainsbourg's collections.

How did you go about making certain interiors opulent, but not too claustrophobic when on screen?

You only need very few things to convey opulence – richness can be expressed in the choice of objects, the stands on which they are displayed and the way they are positioned. Choosing the setting is a very subtle process and Joann and Guillaume were in charge of making these choices during filming. I really like the work that Guillaume did for this film. His lighting and framing, in particular, greatly embellished our work.

The light changes, according to the scene, to create different atmospheres. How did this influence your work?

I discussed the use of color as a way of creating atmosphere with Joann and Guillaume Schiffman: color was often used to denote certain periods in Gainsbourg's life and to his state of mind at the time. For example, the cold yet sensual colors used on the cover of *Love on the Beat* provided inspiration for Madame Arthur's cabaret. The metallic mauve color expresses this precisely, and the lighting is used to reinforce this element. On the other hand, dull monochrome tones were used for the years of occupation.

How did you work on the deformed perspective?

By analyzing Joann's drawings and his comics, we gathered that he had a rather expressionist style, which translated into exaggerated perspectives and oversized objects. We worked on distorting the perspective on some architectural lines, on oversizing volumes on certain axes and on exaggerating or reducing their proportions, depending on the point of view.

Which was the most unlikely set?

We had faith – nothing seemed impossible to us – and Joann trusted us. This is the reason why, instead of filming in Jamaica, we rebuilt Jamaica instead... on a beach in Berck in the north of France.

Interview with Costume Designer Pascaline Chavanne

What kind of style did Joann Sfar want?

He wanted everything to be really stylized in order to highlight the women in the film. This was very important to him. I put together a file for him, covering all the eras in the film. What was difficult was tracing different worlds, marked by some strong personalities, without this affecting the historical reconstitution. The file referred to the real-life protagonists of this story, but also to the worlds resembling the period and Gainsbourg's world. From this starting point, I came up with some very neutral designs. As Joann himself draws and it's almost a form of writing for him, he replied with sketches. It was fantastic. I never thought that I would work like this, and it's the reason why I loved this project – there was this instant richness.

What kind of research did you do?

We went to the INA [National Audiovisual Institute], we went to all the image libraries, we looked at fashion magazines, old copies of Vogue. We also used documents cited in Gilles Verlant's biography of Gainsbourg, and we read up on the migration of Russian Jews to France in the 30s and 40s in order to recreate his parent's world... and then we dropped everything: Joann realized at the fittings that 1930s clothes didn't suit Dinara Droukarova at all. He wanted her to be a mother who never aged, because Joann himself lost his mother at

the age of three, so he had this image of an eternally young and beautiful mother. He brought this idea into this story, and therefore this applied to the costumes too. More generally though, he wanted beauty of each of the women to give off a sense of poetry, even if this was detrimental to the realism of the film. The idea was to give an illusion of the period, but through the poetic vision of Joann.

Did you use any vintage items for the costumes?

No, we made everything ourselves, even for the extras, and often several of the same costume. Joann designed the outfits, then we reworked the designs, made the costumes and aged them, so that they would look worn in.

How did you interpret the personality of Gainsbourg's first wife?

Gainsbourg's first wife was probably a force to be reckoned with, so we expressed that by putting her in a corset, tight skirts and 12 cm heels.

What did you have in mind for Juliette Gréco?

We played with the elements of sensuality and surprise with the décolleté on the back of the dress. We didn't want a simple black dress like a monk's robe, like Gréco used to wear, because it's too dark. Joann wanted to recreate the sensuality of bodies between Gainsbourg and all his women, so we had to show some flesh. So that's how we came up with the cowl neck on the back of the dress, with this fine chain dangling behind.

How did you appropriate the imagery of Bardot?

Joann wanted her to have a feline quality, which is obviously something that Laetitia Casta already has. We designed a playsuit, which was like a second skin - she felt like she was naked when she had it on. This was important for her, because the sensation of being naked changed the way she acted, her gestures and the way she held herself. There was a lot of discussion on the length of her panther coat, and in the end we chose a very short one so that we could see all of her thigh-high boots. Maybe it's not what Bardot really wore, except for the boots, but it corresponds to the images that everyone has of her.

What were your instructions on Jane Birkin?

With Jane, Joann wanted us to stick as closely as possible to reality: the white shirt, the Petit Bateau underwear, the tank tops, jeans. Joann designed the white guipure dress that Lucy Gordon wore in the first scene. It's not exactly the same as the one that Jane wore, but it looks a lot like it. Lucy Gordon had loads of fittings. Jane Birkin had something about her that was completely incredible in the 1970s, sort of a little flame which only she has, and Lucy just channeled something else. The clothes had to emphasize Lucy while giving her something of Jane.

What was your inspiration for Bambou?

Joann wanted to distill the world that she came from: 1980s, drugs, Parisian nightclubs, the night. He imagined her topless on roller skates, just like in the clip. Bambou is a symbol of the 1980s: she is Perfecto, schematic, very synthetic. There are many characters in this story, so they have to be easily identifiable at a glance. They are symbolized by the most representative thing they wore in the period and the crowd that they gravitated towards.

How did you come up with the costume of the creature?

It's a real costume inspired by the beginning of the century, and we made six of them. We struggled quite a bit with this costume, because Joann couldn't articulate exactly what he wanted. There were red herrings, and we made suggestions but there was always something that wasn't quite right, although we didn't know exactly what. In the end, we understood that what Joann had in mind was the little Vampire from his comics. It took us some time to get that.

How did you transform Eric Elmosnino into Gainsbourg?

Eric and Gainsbourg don't have the same body shape at all. And over the years, Gainsbourg changed, and so we had to adjust his costumes and give him a fake paunch to wear at the end. It's not easy to perform a transformation, which takes an actor through so much time and space. Only very few aspects of the man's clothes has changed over the years: the width of the lapel, the position of buttons, the cut of a pair of jeans. We had many fittings with Eric. He was the one who was the most complicated to dress. The Gainsbourg look, achieved with his shirt, jeans and slanted jacket, did not come out the same on Eric. We had to adjust everything to achieve Gainsbourg's nonchalance, to make it as realistic as possible. I watched Gainsbourg's films and a lot of television footage to make sure that I got as close as I could to recreating Gainsbourg's clothes and to conveying his essence. Everything that Eric wears, Gainsbourg could have worn, although not necessarily at the same moment. This was not important for Joann – what was paramount was that we achieved harmony.

About Writer-Director Joann Sfar

August 28th, 1971: Joann Sfar is born in Nice to an Ashkenazi mother and a Sephardic father, a pencil in hand. He very quickly begins to collect comic books and cultivates a bazaar full of quirky characters and funny monsters.

After graduating from high school, he simultaneously pursues a degree in philosophy at the University of Nice (he graduates with honors) and takes classes with Jean-François Debord at the School of Fine Arts in the Morphology department in Paris. These classes take him from autopsy rooms to the Museum of Natural History, where he finds monster-like creatures floating in formaldehyde.

As a teenager, he knocked on the doors of famous comic book artists, who would later on become his guardian angels. He also knocked on the doors of publishers, who finally respond in 1994: during the same month, L'Association, Delcourt and Dargaud decide to publish his first comic books.

In just a few years, the young man who had been criticized for his lack of talent becomes one of the leaders of the "new wave" of comic book art along with Christophe Blain, Lewis Trondheim and Emmanuel Guibert. He makes less formal and less commercial drawings and makes the storytelling a priority. Joann and these other leading artists manage to appeal to a much wider audience.

Sfar, either alone or in collaboration with other artists, has created over 150 comic books, some novels and animated films, amongst them a prize-winning video clip for the rock band Dionysos (Annecy International Animation Film Festival 2006). That same year, he received

an Eisner Award for *The Rabbi's Cat* (was previously nominated for *Klezmer* and *Vampire Loves*) as well as the Jury Prize at Angoulême International Comics Festival. He is nominated for another Eisner Award this year in the Best Adaptation from Another Work category for his adaptation of *The Little Prince*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

He is best known in the United States for his children's books, *Little Vampire Goes to School*, which was on *The New York Times* best-seller list and *Little Vampire does Kung Fu!* (also nominated for an Eisner Award in 2004). Sfar is currently adapting *Little Vampire Goes to School* into an English-language 3D animation feature. He has already adapted his award-winning graphic novel *Rabbi's Cat* (co-directed with Antoine Delesvaux) into a feature length animated film which was released in France in early June and features the voice of actor Eric Elmosnino (star of *Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life*).

Sfar is also an editor for Gallimard's Bayou collection and Citizen Films has produced a documentary about him, *Joann Sfar Draws from Memory*.

Somehow he still manages to find time to play the ukulele, the mandolin, the harmonica, and claims that his violin teacher finds that he has a way with his bow! He lives in Paris with his wife, two children, and cat.

While his literary world borrows heavily from prominent French Jewish authors such as Romain Gary and Albert Cohen, the intelligence of his drawings makes him an heir to Ronald Searle, Quentin Blake and Hugo Pratt. "Not bad, not bad at all" as Gainsbourg used to say....

About the Cast

ERIC ELMOSNINO (SERGE GAINSBORG)

Filmography:

2011 – LA GUERRE DES BOUTONS (Yann Samuëll) (*filming*)

2011 – LE SKYLAB (Julie Delpy)

2011 – LÉA (Bruno Rolland)

2011 – MIKE (Lars Blumers)

2011 - THE RABBI'S CAT (Joann Sfar)

2010 – TOUTES LES FILLES PLEURANT (Judith Godrèche)

2010 – GAINSBORG: A HEROIC LIFE (Joann Sfar)

2009 - LE PÈRE DE MES ENFANTS (Mia Hansen-Love)

2009 - BANCS PUBLICS (Bruno Podalydès)

2008 - L'HEURE D'ÉTÉ (Olivier Assayas)

2007 - LA VIE D'ARTISTE (Marc Fitoussi)

2005 - GENTILLE (Sophie Fillières)

2001 - LIBERTÉ-OLERON (Bruno Podalydès)

1999 - LA VIE NE ME FAIT PAS PEUR (Noémie Lvovsky)

1998 - FIN AOÛT, DÉBUT SEPTEMBRE (Olivier Assayas)

1996 - BERNIE (Albert Dupontel)

1994 - LE COLONEL CHABERT (Yves Angelo)

1985 - À NOUS LES GARÇONS (Michel Lang)

LUCY GORDON (JANE BIRKIN) (1980 – 2009)

Filmography:

2010 – GAINSBORG: A HEROIC LIFE (Joann Sfar)

2009 - CINÉMAN (Yann Moix)
2009 - BRIEF INTERVIEWS WITH HIDEOUS MEN (John Krasinski)
2008 - FROST (Steve Clark)
2007 - SPIDER-MAN 3 (Sam Raimi)
2007 - SERIAL (Kevin Arbouet and Larry Strong)
2005 - LES POUPÉES RUSSES (Cédric Klapisch)
2002 - THE FOUR FEATHERS (Shekhar Kapur)
2001 - SERENDIPITY (Peter Chelsom)
2001 - PERFUME (Michael Rymer and Hunter Carson)

LAETITIA CASTA (BRIGITTE BARDOT)

Filmography:

2011 – ARBITRAGE (Nicholas Jarecki) (*filming*)
2011 – WAR OF THE BUTTONS (Christophe Barratier) (*filming*)
2011 – BEHIND THE WALLS (Julien Lacombe, Pascal Sid)
2011 – THE ISLAND (Kamen Kalev)
2010 – GAINSBOURG: A HEROIC LIFE (Joann Sfar)
2010 - FACE (Tsai Ming-liang)
2007 - THE MAIDEN AND THE WOLVES (Gilles Legrand)
2007 - BORN IN 68 (Olivier Ducastel and Jacques Martineau)
2006 - LE GRAND APPARTEMENT (Pascal Thomas)
2003 - ERRANCE (Damien Odoul)
2001 - RUE DES PLAISIRS (Patrice Leconte)
2000 - LES ÂMES FORTES (Raoul Ruiz)
1999 - GYPSY (Manuel Palacios)
1998 - ASTERIX AND OBELIX TAKE ON CAESAR (Claude Zidi)

DOUG JONES (THE MUG)

Filmography:

2012 – JOHN DIES AT THE END (Don Coscarelli) (*post-production*)
2012 – THE LID (Arthur Romeo) (*post-production*)
2011 – END OF THE ROAD (J.P. Pierce)
2011 – GREYSCALE (Ryan Dunlap)
2011 – ABSENTIA (Mike Flanagan)
2010 - CYRUS (Mark Vadik)
2010 – GAINSBOURG: A HEROIC LIFE (Joann Sfar)
2009 - GREYSCALE (Ryan Dunlap)
2009 - MY NAME IS JERRY (Morgan Mead)
2009 - LEGION (2010) (Scott Charles Stewart)
2009 - SUPER CAPERS (Ray Griggs)
2008 - QUARANTINE (John Erick Dowdle)
2008 - HELLBOY II: THE GOLDEN ARMY (Guillermo Del Toro)
2007 - FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER (Tim Story)
2007 - THE WAGER (Judson Pearce Morgan)
2006 - LADY IN THE WATER (M. Night Shyamalan)
2006 - PAN'S LABYRINTH (Guillermo Del Toro)
2005 - THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (David Lee Fisher)
2004 - HELLBOY (Guillermo Del Toro)
2002 - ADAPTATION (Spike Jonze)

2002 - MEN IN BLACK II (Barry Sonnenfeld)
1997 - MIMIC (Guillermo Del Toro)
1992 - BATMAN RETURNS (Tim Burton)
1991 - HOOK (Steven Spielberg)

ANNA MOUGLALIS (JULIETTE GRECO)

Filmography:

2012 – KISS OF THE DAMNED (Alexandra Cassavetes) (*post-production*)
2011 – CHEZ GINO (Samuel Benchetrit)
2010 – MAMMUTH (Gustave de Kervern, Benoît Delépine)
2010 – GAINSBOURG: A HEROIC LIFE (Joann Sfar)
2008 - COCO CHANEL & IGOR STRAVINSKY (Jan Kounen)
2007 - J'AI TOUJOURS RÊVÉ D'ÊTRE UN GANGSTER (Samuel Benchetrit)
2005 - MARE NERO (Roberta Torre)
2004 - ROMANZO CRIMINALE (Michele Placido)
2004 - REAL LIFE (Panos Koutras)
2004 - D'UN VILLAGE À L'AUTRE (Costas Natsis)
2003 - EN ATTENDANT LE DÉLUGE (Damien Odoul)
2003 - LE PRIX DU DÉsir (Roberto Ando)
2002 - LA VIE NOUVELLE (Philippe Grandrieux)
2002 - LA COMPAGNIE DES HOMMES (Arnaud Desplechin)
2001 - LE LOUP DE LA CÔTE OUEST (Hugo Santiago)
2001 - NOVO (Jean-Pierre Limosin)
2000 - LA CAPTIVE (Chantal Ackerman)
2000 - MERCI POUR LE CHOCOLAT (Claude Chabrol)
1997 - TERMINALE (Francis Girod)

MYLÈNE JAMPANOÏ (BAMBOU)

Filmography:

2011 - CLEAN OUT (Barthélémy Grossman) (*in production*)
2010 – HEREAFTER (Clint Eastwood)
2010 – GAINSBOURG: A HEROIC LIFE (Joann Sfar)
2008 - MARTYRS (Pascal Laugier)
2007 - LA VALLÉE DES FLEURS (Pan Nalin)
2006 - LES FILLES DU BOTANISTE (Dai Sijie)
2005 - CAVALCADE (Steve Suissa)
2004 - 36 QUAI DES ORFÈVRES (Olivier Marchal)
2004 - LES RIVIÈRES POURPRES II (Olivier Dahan)

CAST

<i>Serge Gainsbourg</i>	Eric Elmosnino
<i>Jane Birkin</i>	Lucy Gordon
<i>Brigitte Bardot</i>	Laetitia Casta
<i>La Gueule</i>	Doug Jones
<i>Juliette Gréco</i>	Anna Mouglalis
<i>Bambou</i>	Mylène Jampanoï
<i>France Gall</i>	Sara Forestier
<i>Lucien Ginsburg</i>	Kacey Mottet-Klein
<i>Joseph Ginsburg</i>	Razvan Vasilescu
<i>Olga Ginsburg</i>	Dinara Droukarova
<i>Boris Vian</i>	Philippe Katerine
<i>Elisabeth</i>	Deborah Grall
<i>Fréhel</i>	Yolande Moreau
<i>The model</i>	Ophélie Kolb
<i>Gainsbourg's record producer</i>	Claude Chabrol
<i>Headmaster</i>	François Morel
<i>Lucky Sarcelles</i>	Philippe Duquesne
<i>Gypsy guitarist</i>	Angelo Debarre
<i>Phyphy</i>	Grégory Gadebois
<i>Judith</i>	Alice Carel
<i>Les Frères Jacques</i>	Le Quatuor
<i>France Gall's father</i>	Roger Mollien

CREW

Directed by

Joann Sfar

Written by

Joann Sfar

Produced by

Marc du Pontavice Didier Lupfer

Executive producer

Matthew Gledhill

Casting by

Stéphane Batut

Director of Photography

Guillaume Schiffman

Production designer

Christian Martí

Costume designer

Pascaline Chavanne

Special effects by
David Martí Montse Ribé

Make-up artist
Gill Robillard

Musical arrangements by
Olivier Daviaud

Pianist
Gonzalès

ABOUT MUSIC BOX FILMS

Founded in 2007, Music Box Films has quickly established itself as one of the leading distributors of non-English language feature films in the US in theatres, on DVD/Blu-ray and via Video-on-Demand. Music Box's release of Guillaume Canet's TELL NO ONE was the most popular foreign-language film of 2008 and in 2010, the film adaptations of Stieg Larsson trilogy of international mega sellers dominated the foreign-language film market. The first in the series, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO, with over \$10 million in US box office was one the most popular international releases of the decade. Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation which also owns and operates The Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premiere venue for independent and foreign films.

MUSIC CREDITS

Valse de Melody
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Serge Gainsbourg
© 1971 - Editions Bagatelle
Warner Chappell Music France
Melody Nelson Publishing
© 1971 - Mercury, avec l'autorisation d'Universal Music Vision

Nazi Rock
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Éric Elmosnino et Dyonisos*
© 1975 - Melody Nelson Publishing
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*avec l'aimable autorisation de Barclay

La Java Bleue
(Géo Koger – Noël Renard / Vincent Scotto)
Interprété par Yolande Moreau
© 1938 by editions Beuscher-Arpege
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Sorry Angel
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La Coco
(Edmond Bouchaud / Gaston Ouvrard)
Interprété par Yolande Moreau
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Parce que
(Charles Aznavour / Gaby Wagenheim)
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Antoine le Casseur
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Philippe Duquesne
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Intoxicated Man
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Éric Elmosnino

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La Javanaise
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Éric Elmosnino
et Anna Mougialis
© 1962 - Warner Chappell Music France
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Qui est "IN" Qui est "OUT"
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Émily Loiseau*
et Jeanne Cherhal**
© 1965 - Éditions Bagatelle
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Harley Davidson
(Serge Gainsbourg)
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Comic Strip
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Friedland (Jambe en Bois)
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Requiem pour un Con
(Serge Gainsbourg / Michel Colombier)

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EMI Music Publishing France S.A.
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Elaeudanla Teiteia
(Serge Gainsbourg)
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Initials BB
(Serge Gainsbourg)
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Le Canari est sur le Balcon
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Éric Elmosnino et Lucy Gordon
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Brigitte Bardot
(Martins)
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Love on the Beat
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Éric Elmosnino
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69, Année Érotique
(Serge Gainsbourg)
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L'Hippodame
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Serge Gainsbourg
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Je Bois
(Boris Vian / Alain Goraguer)
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Le Poinçonneur des Lilas
(Serge Gainsbourg)
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et Le Quatuor
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Baby Pop
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Sara Forestier
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Bonnie and Clyde
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et Laetitia Casta
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L'Hôtel Particulier
(Serge Gainsbourg)
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Aux Armes et Caetera
(Rouget de l'Isle / Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Éric Elmosnino
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Baudelaire (Le Serpent qui Danse)
(Baudelaire - Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Éric Elmosnino
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Melody
(Serge Gainsbourg)
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L'Eau à la Bouche
(Serge Gainsbourg)
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Flash Forward
(Serge Gainsbourg)
© 1977 - Melody Nelson Publishing
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Je t'Aime Moi Non Plus
(Serge Gainsbourg)
Interprété par Serge Gainsbourg
et Jane Birkin
©1985 - Melody Nelson Publishing
© 1969 – Mercury France

J'ai Rendez-Vous avec Vous
(Georges Brassens)
Interprété par Joann Sfar
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VANITY FAIR

<http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/features/2007/11/gainsbourg200711?printable=true#ixzz1PAxB8PFU>

by [Lisa Robinson](#)
November 2007

The Secret World of Serge Gainsbourg

Sixteen years after Serge Gainsbourg's death, his small, graffiti-covered Paris house is almost exactly as he left it—crammed with mementos of his poetic, nicotine-and-alcohol-fueled, sometimes scandalous life as France's most adored singer-songwriter, lover of Jane Birkin and Brigitte Bardot, and friend to countless taxi drivers and policemen. His daughter, the singer and movie star Charlotte Gainsbourg, gives *V.F.* an exclusive tour of the idol's retreat.

Paris, May 23, 2007: Carefully avoiding eye contact with the tourists in the street, Charlotte Gainsbourg quickly lets me into the small, graffiti-covered house at 5 bis Rue de Verneuil. Two blocks from Boulevard Saint-Germain in the Seventh Arrondissement, the house is where her father, Serge Gainsbourg, lived and, on March 2, 1991, died at the age of 62. In the days following his death, France went into mourning, fans crowded the tiny street singing his songs, and the women closest to him sat in his bedroom with his body for four days because Charlotte didn't want to let him go. For 16 years this house has been shuttered and locked, with only the housekeeper or occasional family member allowed inside. Charlotte, an actress and a huge star in France, is now the owner of the house and wants, with the help of architect Jean Nouvel, to turn it into a museum. For the first time since Serge Gainsbourg's death, she has agreed to reveal the private world of France's most beloved and important songwriter.

The Man with a Cabbage Head statue in Gainsbourg's house. *Photograph by Jean-Baptiste Mondino.* Except for two pianos which have been removed, the house remains exactly the way it was on the day he died. The walls are covered with black fabric. The floor of the main drawing room is black and white marble. "Cluttered" is an understatement, but each thing is precisely in the place that Serge put it—and there are hundreds of things. Every surface is covered with ashtrays, photographs, and collections: toy monkeys, medals from various branches of the armed services, cameras, guns, bullets, police badges from all over France, pictures of the women who sang his songs—Brigitte Bardot, Anna Karina, Petula Clark, Juliette Gréco, Catherine Deneuve, Isabelle Adjani, Marianne Faithfull, Françoise Hardy, Vanessa Paradis—and, most prominently, his lover of 13 years and Charlotte's mother, the British actress Jane Birkin. There is a larger-than-life-size poster of international sex kitten Bardot, whom Serge first met on the set of a movie in 1959. Later, they carried on a clandestine affair while she was married to playboy Gunther Sachs, and recorded the steamy duet, written by Gainsbourg, "Je T'Aime ... Moi Non Plus." Framed gold records—for albums featuring songs such as "La Javanaise," "Ballade de Melody Nelson," and "Love on the Beat"—are on the walls and the mantel above the fireplace. There is a bronze sculpture of a headless nude that Charlotte tells me was modeled on her mother, a statue of the Man with a Cabbage Head (the title of one of Gainsbourg's greatest albums), Gainsbourg puppet dolls, tape recorders, a black lacquered bar with a cocktail shaker and glasses, a Jimi Hendrix cassette, framed newspaper stories, and empty red jewelry boxes from Cartier—"He loved the boxes," says Charlotte. There are photos of Serge with Ray Charles, with Dirk Bogarde, with his last girlfriend, Bambou, and their son, Lulu. The small

kitchen at the back of the first floor has a 15-inch black-and-white television set, candy bars and two cans of tomato juice in the refrigerator, opened wine bottles, and, in the cupboard, cans of food from 1991—except, says Charlotte, "the ones that exploded."

Upstairs, on the second floor, in Serge's skylit study, there is an IBM electric typewriter even though he never typed, books about Chopin, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Fra Angelico, and Velázquez, and a copy of *Robinson Crusoe*. Photos of Marilyn Monroe line the dark, narrow hallway, including one of the star dead, in the morgue. There is the room Jane Birkin called her "boudoir" and what Serge called "La Chambre de Poupée" (the doll room) after Jane left him, in 1980. The bathroom has a very low bathtub, modeled after one Serge saw in Salvador Dalí's apartment, and bottles of Guerlain, Roger & Gallet colognes, and soap from Santa Maria Novella. His toothbrush is still there. The master bedroom has blackout curtains, a mirrored wall, and twin gold female heads with pearls around their necks at the foot of the black, mink-covered double bed. Chewing gum and mints are next to the bed, and on the bed are dried flowers that have been there since he died. In the large hallway closet: his white Repetto jazz shoes, ties, and pin-striped suits. The house is a shrine, but it's not creepy, and one can imagine how stylish, even decadent this all must have seemed in 1970 when Serge and Jane moved into what was their family home and later would become the solitary lair of Gainsbourg—singer, songwriter, musician, painter, actor, director, smoker, alcoholic, romantic, ladies' man, and revered national figure.

The Carlyle Hotel, New York City, May 3, 2007: "He was a poet," says Charlotte, 36, sitting on the floor of an enormous suite, talking in depth about her father for the first time since his death. She is wearing her usual outfit of jeans and T-shirt, is barefoot, and smokes a lot. "What he did was way ahead of its time. You can just read his lyrics—he plays with words in such a way that there are double meanings that don't work out in English. He was just so very authentic. He was so shy, and very touching. And he was very generous. Every time I get into a taxi [in Paris] I hear a story about my father, because he used to take taxis all day long and [the drivers] tell me how sweet he was. One day a taxi driver told me my father had paid for his teeth to be mended; somebody else's roof needed to be mended and he paid for that. He just had real relationships with people from the street. He was selfish in ways that artists can be, but there was no *snobisme*. He was always amazed at the fact that he had money. I remember going to lovely hotels with him and he was like ... 'Oooh, how fun this is.' He had the eyes of a child."

At home they listened to—among others—Elvis Presley, Ray Charles, and Bob Dylan: "He told me to buy 'Lay Lady Lay,'" says Charlotte (who now stars as Dylan's wife in the Todd Haynes movie *I'm Not There*). He loved Cole Porter and Noël Coward. He embraced rock, saying he wanted to write in a modern context. He preferred the earthier voice of French singer Fréhel to the more showbizzy Edith Piaf. Classically trained, he was influenced by cabaret, modern jazz, African rhythms, Surrealist poetry, and reggae—all of which he utilized to elevate songwriting with his extraordinary body of work: more than 550 songs and 30 albums, numerous movie scores, countless TV commercials and *Scopitones* (short music films).

"Manners were very important to him," Charlotte says. "Eating a certain way with our hands on the table. He was quite strict." So strict that she and her half-sister Kate (Jane Birkin's daughter with her first husband, British composer John Barry) were not allowed to play with toys in the main drawing room or move anything in the house; he would know if you moved one thing one inch. Charlotte went everywhere with her parents, even to nightclubs when, she says, she was so little "I was in a basket."

In the masses of books and newspaper articles and magazine stories written about Serge Gainsbourg during his lifetime and after his death, he has been described as *debauched, irreverent, misanthropic, crude, dissolute, provocateur, genius, alcoholic, poet, national treasure, a romantic who handled language with cynical humor, and a modern-day Baudelaire and Rimbaud*. Charlotte says, "I heard monstrosities about him growing up. That he was a drug addict, which he wasn't—he was an alcoholic and a great smoker, but no drugs. That my mother was a whore because she posed naked on magazine covers." When Charlotte was 13, she recorded "Lemon Incest," a duet with her father that included the lyric "the love that we will never make," and, according to Charlotte, Jane, and friends of Serge's, it was a "pure love song from a father to a daughter." But it shocked the nation, especially when the two of them showed up in the video on a bed together—she in panties and a shirt, he shirtless, wearing jeans. Charlotte says she loved doing the song with him—"although I look at it now and I see how uncomfortable I look in the video, like a robot." She knew then what the subject was, she knew he liked to shock people, and, she admits, so does she, but she feels the "scandal" was overblown. Other scandals—his reggae version of "La Marseillaise," telling the 23-

year-old Whitney Houston on live television that he wanted to "fuck her" (currently on YouTube), or, also on live TV, burning a 500-franc note (illegal in France) to prove how much money he had left after taxes—Charlotte found amusing. "But after he burned the money on TV, I was doing my homework in school the next day and big bullies came in, took my work, and burned it."

Serge Gainsbourg was born Lucien Ginsburg in Paris in 1928. His older sister, Jacqueline Ginsburg, 81, still lives in the apartment on Avenue Bugeaud she lived in with her brother, his twin sister, Liliane, and their parents, who escaped czarist Russia in 1919. (When he started writing songs and performing in clubs, Lucien Ginsburg changed his name to Serge Gainsbourg because, says Jane Birkin, he wanted something more punchy and artistic and "'Lucien' reminded him of a gentleman's hairdresser.") Jacqueline's living room still has the piano Serge used for rehearsals with the women he wrote songs for, and she proudly shows off pictures of him, books about him, and boxed sets of his recordings. In 1940, in Nazi-occupied Paris, the Ginsburgs were forced to declare themselves Jews and, in 1942, wear the yellow star. "But," says Jacqueline, "my mother would sew them on our coats in such a way that we were able to cover them up." Eventually the family went—with false papers—to Limoges, where they managed to survive until the end of the war, when they returned to Paris. Their father was a classically trained musician who earned his living playing piano in cabarets and casinos, and all three children learned to play piano. "Even though we didn't have many things," says Jacqueline, "we were raised in a culture of beauty. Painting, music, literature—that was all very important in our house. And the avant-garde—in addition to Chopin we heard Stravinsky and Ravel." Serge, who had big ears that stuck out and who was considered ugly, often said he wished he had looked like the American movie actor Robert Taylor, but also said, "I prefer ugliness to beauty, because ugliness endures." He started to smoke and drink at 20, when he went into the army. His sister says his cynical persona was always a defense: "When you feel weak, you attack." He showed talent as a painter and attended the Académie des Beaux-Arts, but eventually realized he had to earn a living, and said he "had fear of the painter's bohemian life." Like his father, he played piano in clubs, then branched out to write songs. He won the 1965 Eurovision contest with a song he wrote for the cutesy pop star France Gall; he then wrote a sexually sly song for her, which she thought was about sucking lollipops. He started to write successful songs for others and then, later, himself. He wrote and directed 4 movies and acted in 29. He became really famous at 40 with the orgasmic "Je T'Aime ... Moi Non Plus," then even more so with songs that ranged from lush and romantic melodies to Surrealist poetry to caustic and dark concept albums. He used American words in his songs—"blue jeans," "flashback," "jukebox"—and studied the Ford Motor Company catalogue for phrases to use in his song "Ford Mustang." He saw his family every Sunday for dinner and remained close to his parents until they died. Jacqueline recalls his love affair with Bardot after his first two marriages (his second produced two children, Natacha and Paul) ended in divorce. "He was proud to be with the most beautiful woman in the world," she says, and his family was not at all shocked by "Je T'Aime ... Moi Non Plus"—they loved everything he did unconditionally. When Bardot begged him not to release their original version because Gunther Sachs was furious, Serge re-did the song with Jane, in 1969, and it became a No. 1 hit. "We were so happy when the Vatican banned it," says Jacqueline, "because it meant more publicity."

Paris, May 24, 2007: Jane Birkin, 60, is Pilates-toned and appears to have the same boyish body she had when American audiences first saw her, in a brief nude scene in Antonioni's 1966 film, *Blow-Up*. Since that time, she has acted in 68 movies, recorded more than 20 albums, received an Order of the British Empire, had a third daughter—the now 25-year-old actress Lou Doillon (with French director Jacques Doillon, the man she left Serge for)—and is a political activist. Her 13-year affair with Serge Gainsbourg was a grand, passionate *amour*. Along with Charlotte, she guards his legacy; Serge left her a percentage of his song publishing, and she has performed those songs in concert halls all over the world. Her apartment, on the Rue Jacob, is a worldly display of exotic bohemianism. Paisley-covered walls are adorned with hundreds of framed photos of Serge, Jacques, Charlotte, Kate, Lou, Jane's grandchildren, their drawings, Charlotte's movie posters, and Serge's handwritten song lyrics. Stuffed rabbits wearing pearl necklaces are grouped on a table playing cards. There is a collection of majolica pottery, a huge flat-screen TV, and everywhere you look, there are books—lining the shelves in her bedroom and study. And although originally designed by her and named for her, that Hermès Birkin bag is nowhere to be seen. This apartment and the Rue de Verneuil house, five blocks away, are not the "art-directed" palaces that pass for bohemian in today's shelter magazines; this is the real thing. She makes me the best cup of coffee I've had in Paris, and in between bites of steak tartare washed down with Evian water, she talks nonstop about Serge. She has a tendency to not draw breath, and goes off on flights of fancy, but she is wildly entertaining and quite clear about the man who for 13 years and beyond dominated her life.

They met when he was 40 and she was 22, on the set of the 1969 movie *Slogan*. Wanting to get to know him better, and upset by his dismissive attitude, she orchestrated a dinner with him and the film's director. After dinner, she and Serge danced, and when he stepped on her toes, she realized that this man she thought arrogant was really very shy. That first night, he took her to a transvestite bar, then a club where the American blues singer Joe Turner sang, then to a Russian nightclub, and then to the Hilton Hotel, where the desk clerk asked, "Your usual room, Mr. Gainsbourg?" Nothing sexual happened that night, because he fell asleep, but very quickly they became inseparable. They went to Venice, stayed in a corner suite in the Gritti Palace, drank at Harry's Bar every night, and fell madly in love. When they first returned to Paris they stayed at L'Hôtel, where Oscar Wilde had died. They then moved to Rue de Verneuil, where Serge selected every piece of furniture and designed everything in the house. "Serge had seen Dalí's house and was very struck by the fact that he had black astrakhan on the walls," says Jane. "So Serge wanted black on his walls, but he wanted it to be felt, the special felt that was used for policemen's trousers. He could never take any change. After I had Charlotte, when she got so big that her legs came out of the crib I said, 'I must buy her a bed, Serge, without offending your eye,' and he said, 'Put socks on her.' I never saw him take a bath. He was the cleanest man I ever knew, he knew how to wash all the bits, but in 13 years I never saw him take a bath, I never saw him go to the loo, I never saw him completely naked, the children never saw him naked—and they tried like mad. He was very *pudique*." (The closest translation of this word in English is shy, modest, discreet.) "If he had seen me giving birth to Charlotte, it's possible he never would have slept with me again, and I wasn't taking that chance. He always paid his taxes early: he felt he was an immigrant—his parents were from Russia and as such he should behave correctly. He wanted shoes that felt like gloves, so I got him white Repetto ballet shoes, which he wore without socks. I bought him jewelry and encouraged him to keep a three-day stubble on his face. He sat in gilt chairs after fashion shows and picked out dresses for me—Balenciaga, Yves Saint Laurent, Givenchy. Every New Year's Eve we would go to Maxim's and he would liken it to being on the *Titanic* because everyone was so much older, and I would nick the ashtrays and the cutlery."

He was jealous and so was she. When Jane made a movie with Bardot and the director was Bardot's first husband, Roger Vadim, Serge was jealous of Vadim, but, says Jane, "I was much more intrigued by Bardot. I wanted to see every portion of her body to see if she was as beautiful as I thought she was, and she is. Checked from head to toe by me. There's not one fault in the woman." Contrary to rumors, Jane and Serge never did marry. "He said in France I'd need to be fingerprinted and have a blood sample," Jane says, "and I was slightly offended and said, 'What on earth for?' I also had a secret fear that marriage changed things, and so, in fact, we weren't." (Charlotte is superstitious, too; she lives with actor-director Yvan Attal and their two children but remains unmarried.) After Serge and Jane made a movie in Yugoslavia, he bought a Rolls-Royce with cash because "it tickled him to think he was buying a Rolls with Communist money," she says. It was racing green, he had no driver's license (he said, "You cannot drink and drive and I have chosen"), and after using the vehicle a few times to have someone drive them up and down the Rue Faubourg Saint-Honoré and go to a party at the Rothschilds, he put it in a garage, where he would occasionally visit it, sit inside, and have a smoke. When he drank champagne, he drank only Krug, but he also drank mint juleps, Gibson cocktails, and liqueurs; he'd sit at the bar of the Hôtel Ritz or the Hôtel Raphael and work his way through all the different colors. "He always said if he gave up smoking he might live longer, but it might seem like an awful long time," says Jane, "and what a bore."

In 1973 he had the first of two heart attacks. "When they carried him out of the Rue de Verneuil to go to the American Hospital, he insisted on taking his Hermès blanket because he didn't like the one they had on the stretcher and he also grabbed two cartons of Gitanes." It wasn't permissible to smoke in the hospital, so, says Jane, "he asked me to bring him some Old Spice deodorant for men. I thought, Well, he's getting very particular about things, but in fact he was trying to camouflage the fact that he was smoking like a chimney. And when he left the hospital they pulled the bedside drawers open and there were all these little medicine bottles filled with water and cigarette butts." (According to Jane, Serge bought the papers every day and loved when he was in them, and after this heart attack he personally called a journalist from *France-Soir* and conducted a bedside interview at the hospital.)

Paris, May 28, 2007: French superstar singer-songwriter Françoise Hardy sits in her Zen-like apartment, on the Avenue Foch, and remembers Serge. "When he was not on alcohol, he was very nice, almost like a little boy," she says. "And when he was drunk, he could be disagreeable ... mean. Once, we were in a hotel bar and suddenly he asked me how I could stand all my husband's infidelities. It was terrible for me to hear that. He could be very destructive. But his text was like a jewel. You can read his words just like you would

read poetry. I'm not very fond of poetry in general, but I appreciate reading Serge Gainsbourg's lyrics because of the games he plays with words, the tone of the words. He was the very best writer we had in France."

Jane Birkin describes their daily routine in the 1970s as follows: they woke up at three in the afternoon; she picked up the children at school and took them to the park, brought them home for a children's dinner, the *au pair* would give them a bath, and when the children went to bed she and Serge would kiss them good night and go out on the town. They'd come back "with the dustman," wait until the children woke up at 7:30, then go to sleep. Their alcohol-fueled nights would often turn, as Jane puts it, "barmy." Once, at Castel's nightclub, on the Rue Princesse on the Left Bank, Serge turned over the basket that she carried as a handbag, emptying its contents onto the floor. Furious, she managed to find a custard pie and threw it in his face. He walked out; she whizzed by him in the street and headed straight for the river and, after she was sure he was watching, flung herself into the Seine. She was rescued by firemen, Serge was relieved she was alive, and they walked back to the Rue de Verneuil arm in arm.

Régine, the singer and nightclub owner, recalls, "I met Serge in 1953 when he was singing in a little cabaret and I was the barmaid. He was a very talented, strong personality; we had a lot in common. Very intelligent, clever, amusing, very crazy—everything what we like. He was feeling like he was not a beautiful man, but inside he was a beautiful man, and his charm was more important. And when a man like that has success, they start to have beautiful women. Serge and Bardot were in my kitchen all the time because she didn't want to go to restaurants. She was always laughing with him, and he was thrilled to be with her, such a beautiful woman." Serge wrote songs for Régine; he encouraged her to be more earthy and less feather-boa-showbiz. She saw him three months before he died. And how was he? "Drinking." Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoit Dunckel are the fashionable French duo Air (who wrote the music for Charlotte Gainsbourg's recent, gorgeous CD, 5:55), and they say that, just like Americans who remember where they were and what they were doing when President Kennedy was shot or when John Lennon was murdered, everyone in France remembers where they were when Serge Gainsbourg died. They also say that the title of "Je T'Aime ... Moi Non Plus"—which translates as "I love you, me neither"—came from a story told about Dalí, who reportedly said, "Picasso is Spanish—me too. Picasso is a painter—me too. Picasso is a Communist—me neither."

Jane recalls, "Serge thought it was vulgar that people said 'I love you' all the time. Either he didn't believe it or because he was *prudique* he didn't want to say, 'Moi aussi.' Or he didn't believe the girl would really love him. [In 1969] he asked me if I wanted to sing 'Je T'Aime ... Moi Non Plus' with him, and given that all the pretty actresses in Paris wanted to do it, I said, 'Yes, but don't play me Bardot's version because I'd be embarrassed as hers was so wonderful.'" (In 1986, Bardot gave permission to release the original version to benefit her animal charities and Greenpeace. Today, Bardot says, "He was a lord, and 'Je T'Aime ... Moi Non Plus' is a hymn to love, a unique homage for me. I only want to keep the best and forget the worst ... if it's possible. I will love him forever, me neither.")

Serge and Jane recorded the song in London in two vocal booths at a studio near Marble Arch. "He told me to sing it higher—it gave it more of a sense of a choirboy," she says. "In those days you only had two takes, so we did it twice and he was worried that I'd get so carried away with the heavy breathing that I wouldn't stop in time to hit the high note at the end. We brought it to the man who was the head of [record label] Phillips and I sat on the floor with my basket and Serge sat in his chair and this man listened to it, with all its explicit sexual moaning, and said, 'Look, children, I'm willing to go to prison, but I'm not going to prison for a 45 single—I'd rather go for a long-playing record, so go back and make another 10 songs and we'll bring it out as an LP.'" As for rumors that they really were making love when they recorded it, Jane says, "Serge's reply to that was it wouldn't have been a single, it would have been a long-playing record." While "Je T'Aime" was by no means Gainsbourg's best song, it "did the job," as Françoise Hardy puts it. The duet with Jane became a worldwide sensation, banned by the BBC, banned by the Vatican, with bootleg copies circulated all over the world. In America, Neil Bogart, the head of Buddah Records, played "Je T'Aime" at a party in Los Angeles, and everyone kept telling him to play it again, and again, and again. He thought if he could get someone to do a longer, English song like this, he would have a hit. And eventually, he got Giorgio Moroder to produce Donna Summer's "Love to Love You Baby." Voilà: disco. "Toward the end of our life living together, I just remember everything became so monotonous," says Jane Birkin. "Because we didn't go to the four or five nightclubs anymore—it was just Élysée Matignon and it was the Élysée Matignon until four in the morning because everyone gave Serge something to drink and it

was just systematic and boring. And when I think about it now it's terrible to say, because the piano used to come out of the floor and people would be hanging around like they do in nightclubs—two, three in the morning—and they'd ask him for a little melody.... So now I feel like I was living with Frédéric Chopin going, 'Hey, Frédéric, you've got to go home.' I used to wrench him from the piano and tell people to stop giving him drinks, because they'd give him drinks and he'd give them drinks and it was never-ending until four o'clock in the morning."

Paris, May 22, 2007: Actress Jeanne Moreau sits at a table at Mariage Frères wearing a black suit with the small, round, red Légion d'Honneur in her lapel. "Serge was very well educated, very well read, very sophisticated, very charming," she says. "Serge presented what people never dare to show of themselves. He said things that people would have loved to say. People were not envious of him being rich, *never*, because he was generous. Johnny Hallyday goes and lives in Switzerland so not to pay taxes, but Gainsbourg didn't give a damn. That's why he was loved. And he knew how to write songs for women. It's beyond language. Even if you play Serge's songs in the middle of Africa, where nobody understands the words, they'll be caught. It's like when Lillian Gish said she regretted there were no more silent movies that spoke to everybody."

Around seven years ago, Charlotte went to the Rue de Verneuil house one day and all the graffiti had been covered over with "disgusting yellow" paint. She thought it had been done by the police, but they told her the neighbors thought it was "filthy" and they had organized this cover-up, at night. "But the great thing was a week later," she says, "it was all covered with graffiti again." Because the house is so small, Charlotte's dream of turning it into a museum has met with all sorts of bureaucratic red tape; there's no room for security or wheelchair access and whatnot. But she's determined: "I'd like people to visit the house, then maybe go to another place next door to read about him and listen to music." According to Jane, "Charlotte is miraculous as a daughter. It has taken so long for her to have paid all the bills, to see the alarm system is working, the heating is working, to keep the house going. She stuck it through thick and thin when every single minister of culture, every single mayor of Paris, has promised a museum and it's never happened in 16 years. On the other hand, everything that was her father's was so public; this way she had one little place that was private, where she could remember what it was like as a child."

In the Brasserie Vagenende, on Boulevard Saint-Germain, actress, singer, and star of the French New Wave cinema Anna Karina remembers Serge, with whom she starred in the 1967 television musical *Anna*. "I always thought he was very cute, very sexy. I never liked the pretty faces—that's boring. I was just coming out of my marriage to Jean-Luc Godard, and I guess I didn't fall for Serge, because I was afraid he'd take over my life. This was before Bardot and before Jane. He was very elegant, always dressed in a beautiful suit. He never stopped smoking, or drinking, but maybe it's better to live the way you want to instead of always saying, 'I have to drink water.' He phoned me the day before he died and said, 'Anna, I want to do a picture with you and Aurore Clément.' He said, 'We'll have dinner together and talk about it. I'll call you tomorrow.' And the next day I heard on the radio that he died."

New York City, June 4, 2007: "Serge enjoyed every single second of stardom," says his friend and drinking companion François Ravard, who produced Gainsbourg's last movie, *Stan the Flasher*, and now manages Marianne Faithfull. "Everybody recognized him, and he loved that—taxi drivers, policemen. He loved afternoon daiquiris with the police and going into the police van; he used them like a taxi," Ravard says. Toward the end of his life, Gainsbourg created "Gainsbarre," a sort of outlandish, alter ego for himself that allowed him to say shocking things on television. "He invented 'Gainsbarre' as a joke, a line," says Ravard. "He would say, 'That's not me, that's Gainsbarre.' And later on when he became so famous and was on TV all the time the press made it serious, the double persona became a much bigger thing." But despite the alcoholism and deteriorating health, Ravard says, "if you had an appointment with him at seven in the morning he was always on time, never late in the recording studio, never late on a movie set, heaven to work with. And really, really quick, because he knew exactly what he wanted."

'After I left Serge, I was most grateful to Catherine Deneuve," says Jane Birkin, "because they were doing a film together and she looked after him; she saw he had his breakfast and that he ate okay." Even though he was devastated that Jane had left him for Jacques Doillon, Serge and Jane remained close. When she gave birth to Lou, she rang Serge up to tell him, and the following day a large package arrived at the American Hospital with little clothes he'd bought for the baby with a card that read, "Papa Deux." "He was so essential in our lives. I always felt I had a metaphorical room in his house, and he had a very real room in our house, if he wanted it, with Charlotte there. I was proud of the relationship."

Georges V/Four Seasons Hotel, Paris, May 23, 2007: Bambou, Gainsbourg's paramour for the last decade of his life, arrives with Lulu (né Lucien), their now 21-year-old son. Lulu is very tall, big, handsome, with long dark hair—he looks like a rock star. Bambou (née Caroline Von Paulus) is half Chinese, half German, and looks at least a decade younger than her 48 years. She carries a Birkin bag; she says Lulu gave it to her on his 18th birthday to thank her for taking such good care of him. They live in Paris in the house Serge bought for Lulu. Serge nicknamed her "Bambou," she says, because she used to smoke opium and was a junkie when she met him (she's now sober), but, she says, she never used drugs in his presence—he wouldn't allow it in his house. She tells me how he tried to turn her into a singer, about his failing health after a 1989 liver operation and subsequent stays in the hospital, and says, "Serge was everything to me. He was my lover, my father—he was my real family. And with Lulu, he left me an angel." In the days leading up to her birthday on March 1, 1991, "I just felt something bad was going to happen," she says. "He was very sick." After her celebratory birthday dinner, when he didn't answer his phone all night or the following day (she hadn't stayed at Rue de Verneuil and he had never given her a key), she finally called the firemen, who broke in and discovered that he had died of a heart attack in his sleep.

'On the Monday before he died, he rang me up and said he was going to New Orleans to do a jazz record," Jane says, "and that Charlotte was there with him, and he said, 'She wants to live with me. She said I was the man she'd been looking for all her life.' I thought, How wonderful. I was in England visiting my sick father when Jacqueline phoned to say Serge was dead. I couldn't believe it. I must have screamed. I rushed back to Paris, and when I arrived I thought things were still moving, people haven't stopped their work, he can't be dead, perhaps it's all wrong. For four days we all stayed around Serge in his bedroom—Bambou, me, Charlotte, Kate—we didn't eat, and Charlotte said she didn't want him to go away. I knew people you could contact who would preserve the body, so I got out of the house somehow and got to my friend, who rang up the people so they could preserve Serge and not have to bury him right away, because Charlotte didn't want him to be buried, she wanted to keep him. Then, when Charlotte said she wanted him to be buried, I went with Jacqueline and Bambou to the cemetery Montparnasse (where Baudelaire, Man Ray, Jean-Paul Sartre, and many other artists are buried) and looked around for a place he would want, and I saw where we buried his mother and father and thought that was the best place because it was bang in the middle, right next to all the musicians. I knew he wouldn't want to be down some side alley not in view." For days the tiny Rue de Verneuil was shut down, with people in the streets, singing his songs, not unlike the scene around the Dakota after John Lennon was killed. "I went to the funeral even though I don't go to funerals," says François Ravard, "and I had everyone calling me, like it was a Stones concert, for *tickets* ... like it was *sold out*. He would have *loved* that." The funeral was attended by many celebrities: Deneuve read a eulogy; so did President Mitterand, who called him "our Baudelaire." Brigitte Bardot sent the message "I love him as a man but even more as a musician." Also on hand: hundreds of policemen and taxi drivers.

'He refused to use the word 'genius,' because he thought it was very pretentious," says Jane. "He said, 'I'm just a great lyric writer.' Serge was 15 years ahead of everyone else with the music he did, and he could have been discovered after his death. For he who was worried about whether he was loved, he knew it in his lifetime. He knew that he and [comedian] Coluche were the two people that the French loved more than anybody in France. But would he have been able to imagine the people singing in the streets after his death, the Japanese girls trying to find his tomb in the cemetery Montparnasse, the Americans writing on the wall of his house, we miss you, serge—life is such a bore? I don't think he could have imagined that." "When he died," says Charlotte, "his music was on the radio every minute. I know every note; you could put two seconds of any song of his on and I'd recognize it and I'd ask somebody to stop it. I couldn't hear his voice—it was really unbearable for me to hear. It still is."

Marianne Faithfull, who worked with Serge in the early 60s, says, "I was very sad when he died. I thought by the time I'd grown up and gotten off drugs that there'd be a time when I'd work with him again. I still miss him. And every time I start to make a record I think, Fuck, it's so annoying that he's dead."

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