

In Conversation with TER: Antoine Olivier Pilon, the star of 'Mommy'



When Xavier Dolan made his return last summer with the enchanting, permissive *Mommy* – the film world focused its eyes on a trio of Canada's finest actors. Two, the brilliant Anne Dorval and Suzanne Clément, were recognisable from their previous work, but there was one young man who understandably stole the show.

Seventeen year old Antoine-Olivier Pilon had worked with Dolan on previous smaller projects and had had success in TV and film in his home country. But it was under the artistic, apparently stringent hand of the Québécois master that he came into his own. His performance as a young sufferer of ADHD returning home to his widowed mother is tangible and authentic – one of the greatest performances by a young person in the past decade.

In the run up to *Mommy's* release in the UK, Antoine answered some questions for The Edinburgh Reporter about the film, his music taste and his plans for the future.

It has been almost a year since *Mommy* premiered at Cannes, how has the past year been for you? Have you been able to visit new countries or meet interesting people through the film?

Last summer was really busy when we were promoting *Mommy*! It let me explore more of French cities like Lyon, Nice and Lille among others. I also got to visit Los Angeles to do some photoshoots, and speak to loads of magazines from countries all over the world; such as Turkey, Korea and England.

Xavier Dolan has become one of Canada's greatest modern

directors, and you have had the chance to work with him on more than one occasion. As an actor, what is it like working with him and what does he expect from you on set?

Yeah, it's a great privilege for a young actor like me to get to work with Xavier, and I'm really grateful for the experience. He is pretty demanding on set and directs his cast very well. He gets really close to the whole team and can create a climate of trust, complicity and necessary detachment for his actors. To me Xavier is a mentor, a friend; a big brother.

Music plays a huge part in the film – what music have you been listening to recently and do you find it an influence in the same way Xavier does?

Of course, music plays an important role in my life. It's a big source of inspiration. Depending on what I'm doing, I listen to different styles of music such as rap, rock and dubstep. Listening to a song or a specific genre can put me in a certain state of mind. It can help me recollect things, or inspire me for future projects.

You are still only 17, are there projects you are working on at the moment or are you focusing on school?

I'm trying to balance a possible career in comedy and school, which is still important for me. I try to make a balance that will allow me to get better at certain things; whether that's academic, cultural or a sport. In short, I'd like to perfect my English and study a martial art!

If you could define the film in three words – from your own perspective – how would you? What do you hope people take from it?

Mommy in three words? Unsettling, sensitive and deep.

When watching the film, I hope that people understand that the life of these characters is not a work of fiction but that it represents reality. I hope that people are affected by the relationship between its three lead characters who manage to

find a balance only when they can confide in each other. I hope that the viewers recognise parts of themselves in moments and situations within the film. What I appreciate in Mommy is its ability to not leave anybody indifferent.

Mommy has its UK release on March 20th