

Interview with [Bruno Dreyfürst](#) (Georges de Beauregard in *Nouvelle Vague*, Richard Linklater's film competing at Cannes 2025)

In spring 2024, Bruno Dreyfürst was cast in a key role in *Nouvelle Vague*, directed by Richard Linklater. The film premiered in the official selection at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival, where it received a ten-minute standing ovation, attracting significant international attention. Dreyfürst plays [Georges de Beauregard](#), “Beau-Beau,” the producer of *À bout de souffle* (*Breathless*), whose involvement is crucial to the development and progression of the project. His presence on screen anchors the story from the start of production, through moments of project oversight, to the film's final word, making his character a central narrative pillar in the history of the French New Wave.

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How did your casting for *Nouvelle Vague* go?

It was quite an adventure. At first, I almost missed the chance entirely. My agent, David Vatinet, sent me a casting invitation for the role of Jean-Pierre Melville in Richard Linklater's upcoming film, with a photo of Melville attached. I wasn't sure I really looked the part, but I figured if they reached out, they must think it's possible. They asked me to talk for up to 3 minutes about a musical or visual work I relate to... I wasn't inspired at all. I skimmed the email and thought: I don't really know what Melville liked or disliked, I know some of his films, but not much. I mentioned the casting to a friend on the phone, reread the email aloud, and she said, “Just pick something you like and talk about it for three minutes.” That was the moment I realized I had to talk about myself. I chose one of my favorite albums, *Dark Side of the Moon* by Pink Floyd. Since I had no plans coming up, I decided to shave my head clean to fit the character a bit more. So it ended up being a mix of Bruno Dreyfürst (shaved and in a suit) and Jean-Pierre Melville in front of the camera. The first take was terrible, the second was okay. I thought, I'm not doing more for this strange exercise. I sent it in saying, “I don't know if this is what you wanted, but here it is...” They replied, “It'll be great.” Then the usual waiting.

Some time later, my agency called to say the casting director, Stéphane Batu, wanted to see me in Paris. I received a video interview of Melville (with transcript) to rehearse for the casting—another interesting but unusual task. I worked on the text, watched the video repeatedly to get the rhythm, voice, and intonations right, to really get into the character. Then I looked for a costume, called around for glasses and a hat, typical Melville features.

Tram, train, Paris. I did the Melville audition, which went reasonably well. Then Stéphane said, “The more I watch you, the more I think you'd be great as the film's producer, Georges de Beauregard. Want to try for that part too?” Why not, my train wasn't for another two hours, so I had time. “You don't have the scene, but we'll do an improv: Godard's a no-show on shooting day, Beauregard is furious and finds him at a café to give him a piece of his mind. First line: ‘Ah, here comes the big sick man...’” We did two improvs, with Stéphane filming and giving lines improv too. Then back to Strasbourg and more waiting.

Happy with how it went, I thought that was that. Then a few days later, the agency called again: this time, Richard Linklater himself wanted to see me for Beauregard, in Paris the following week. Wow. I got the improv scene script, prepared it, researched Beauregard—there was little info and few videos, found a costume and glasses (different from Melville's), took tram and train

again, stayed at a hotel on my wife's advice to arrive fresh, Paris. I got there early (very German of me), waited a bit so not too early (very French), and entered the ARP production offices. I was warmly welcomed by a lady who turned out to be the producer, met the casting director, and then came face-to-face with Godard—Guillaume Marbeck, already cast for the role, in costume and iconic black glasses. I thought, damn, they really nailed Godard. Stéphane told me Rick would arrive soon and not to worry if he was quiet during auditions. When Rick came in, I greeted him, exchanged a few words in English, and the audition started. Surprisingly, I was calm and in my element, largely thanks to the kindness of the casting director, Rick, and having a scene partner already deeply in character. One take, some direction, two takes, done. "Thanks, goodbye everyone," I was already thrilled to be there, to audition in front of Mr. Linklater, who said to me as I left, "Bye bye Beau-Beau." A sign? I didn't answer, then metro, train, Strasbourg. More than a month later, when I had stopped hoping and filled my calendar with appointments... a call: "You got the part of Beaugard." "Great, thank you, wonderful." I hung up and Yeeeeeeeeaaaaaahh!!!

How did you prepare to portray your character?

I prepared the role as I did the casting, researching everything I could find on Beaugard. Playing a real person is always interesting and unusual. In my case, it was challenging compared to those playing Truffaut, Chabrol, Belmondo, Godard... because there was little material on Beaugard. Luckily, a friend found a rare biography written by his daughter. It was a fascinating read, revealing a much more complex and colorful character than I had imagined. A passionate cinephile, unconventional, always seeking innovation (he pushed many New Wave directors forward even though he could have rested on the success of *À bout de souffle*, including Agnès Varda), a bit sly and old-school, quick to anger but the next day showing up with a case of champagne as a peace offering. A wholehearted man, willing to take risks but above all loyal and faithful in friendship, notably with Jean-Luc Godard. Every testimony from the film world at his funeral highlights his iconic status.

As I read, I found more and more points of connection with "Beau-Beau." Then came the scripts: reading, memorizing... One rare advantage with this film was being able to rehearse with Rick, the actors, and much of the crew—first at the table, sometimes tweaking the text, then on the locations where we would shoot. That helped create a band of friends even before filming began and allowed us to explore scenes and actions ahead of time rather than discovering everything on shooting day amid the chaos. The more the process advanced, the more concrete it became. Then came costume fittings, especially important for a period film to truly slip into the character's skin. The hairdresser's chair was where I first got to be clean-shaven and bald—something new for me—and that look stayed for three months. But it was for art, for cinema, and finally, I could be "Beau-Beau."

How was the filming experience?

Thanks to all the preparation and working with a team fully invested in their roles, and under Richard Linklater's direction, everything went smoothly. At least that's what we hoped. There was a mix of eagerness and nerves, but it all went very well. Richard is precise, demanding, knows exactly what he wants, yet is constantly exploring, always kind and considerate—from start to finish. Never a harsh word. Even when there were delays, technical issues, or changes—the usual challenges of any film shoot—nothing changed.

The gods of cinema were on Richard's side: despite a shoot slightly longer than the original *Godard* and mostly outdoors, he always managed to avoid weather interruptions. The weather was tricky but never enough to postpone filming—showers or storms passed quickly or were short-lived.

It really felt like a band shooting, mirroring what you see in the film. Rick took the gamble, except for Zoey Deutch, to trust mostly seasoned but almost unknown actors to the public. A bold but successful choice given what I consider a wonderful cast.

Richard Linklater doesn't speak French. How did you communicate on set?

As Rick said in an interview, it was his first time directing actors speaking mostly French, except for some sequences with Jean Seberg (Zoey Deutch) and François Moreuil (Paolo Luka-Noé) in English. That wasn't a problem for him. He focused on acting and visuals. For the text, he had the script in both languages. He was supported by a French team ensuring the French lines were correct, notably Michèle Halberstadt (adapter), first assistant Hubert Engammare, and script supervisor Camille Arpajou. I'm comfortable in English, so that wasn't a problem. Each actor managed with their English, and when stuck, we asked friends for help. It was never an issue—we understood each other because we were all on the same page.

What do you think of the final film?

I'm very proud to have been part of this incredible journey. Seeing the result of all our work on screen was deeply moving. The black-and-white imagery—thanks to the wonderful cinematographer David Chambille—the 4:3 format, the music, the phrasing, all take us right back to 1959. It's like time travel: a vibrant, often humorous homage to the French New Wave. Richard Linklater, a true master of the "hangout movie," lets us spend 1 hour and 45 minutes with this joyful group of New Wave pioneers, witnessing the wild and baroque creation of what would become a milestone in film history.

Of course, it's hard to be completely objective, but I truly believe Rick succeeded in making a tribute film—passionate, feel-good (and that's so welcome!), light and funny, incredibly well-researched yet accessible even to those unfamiliar with the Nouvelle Vague. It makes you want to (re)watch *À bout de souffle*—and maybe even make a film yourself.

What memory will you take away from your experience in Cannes?

Well—it depends on which experience in Cannes you mean. The first was actually our final day of shooting, right at the far end of the Croisette, in that iconic location where Beauregard decides to produce Godard's first feature film, which would become the legendary *À bout de souffle*. A perfect symbol: ending the film with the scene where the film itself is born. And once again, Richard managed to shoot under a clear blue sky—just one day after a wild hailstorm had hit us!

And then, a little more than a year later... Cannes again, but this time for the Festival.

Nouvelle Vague, directed by Richard Linklater and featuring, among others, me—Bruno Dreyfûrst, a Franco-German actor from Lauterbourg in Alsace—was selected for the Official Competition at the 78th Cannes Film Festival! I think I still haven't fully processed it. And yet, on May 17th, there we were—walking the red carpet for the film's world premiere, with Quentin

Tarantino just ahead of us under the flashbulbs. The film was seen by another cinema legend, Claude Lelouch, and by so many others. The red carpet, the steps, the Palais des Festivals, the photographers—it was a whirlwind of glitter and the glorious excess of Cannes, a kind of joyful madness. And in the middle of it all—there we were, the *Nouvelle Vague* team, living out a childhood dream.

What did this experience bring you as an actor?

We all did a lot of work digging into our characters. The phrasing especially—it's a period film, so improvising is tougher. Our modern way of speaking, our filler words just don't fit. So we had to be true to the situations, but also let them breathe. That challenge alone was incredibly enriching for me as an actor.

On a personal level, it was also about meeting this beautiful, talented group of actors.

And of course, working under Richard Linklater's direction was just amazing.

After the premiere, the audience response in Cannes was incredible. And so far, reviews have been really good. That's what matters most: hearing that you did your job well. For a group of actors who are still up-and-coming, being recognized like that is already a huge reward.

You have worked with two directors renowned for their exceptionally intensive rehearsal processes: Barrie Kosky and Richard Linklater. How has this culture of repetition shaped your understanding of character work, and how do you maintain that depth on film sets where time pressure is often a defining factor?

For me, working in film and theatre is very similar to making music. When you take up an instrument or start learning a piece, you go through several stages: first, the pleasure of discovery; then the often less glamorous phase of practice and repetition – until, eventually, a sense of freedom emerges. A freedom that allows you to rediscover the material each time, to introduce variations, or even to improvise.

Although theatre and film demand very different approaches – one resembling a long-distance runner, the other a sprinter working in fragmented continuity – the essential challenge is always the same: finding the right balance between consistency and creative proposal within the character and the performance. In that sense, both forms of work complement each other.

Improvisation, which I have practised for many years, has been central to this process. It allows me to stay fully present in the moment, to remain open and inventive, while not being destabilised by unforeseen circumstances or by the immediacy that filming often requires.

This is precisely what I found so enriching in my collaborations with Barrie Kosky and Richard Linklater. Both combine a very high level of precision and expectation with a remarkable openness to exploration. They listen deeply to the actors they work with. They know exactly what they are looking for, yet they also take actors as they are and work with them much like musicians with an instrument.

This blend of rigour, generosity and trust creates an exceptional working atmosphere. It challenges us to go beyond our limits and enables us to deliver our strongest and most truthful performances.