



tiff. nextwave

## The We and the I

Michel Gondry

USA, 2012  
English

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

103 minutes | Colour/DCP (D-Cinema)

Production Company: Partizan

Producer: Georges Bermann, Michel Gondry,

Julie Fong, Raffi Adlan

Screenplay: Michel Gondry, Paul Proch,

Jeff Grimshaw

Cinematographer: Alex Disen Hof

Editor: Jeff Buchanan

Production Designer: Tommaso Ortino

Principal Cast: Michael Brodie, Teresa Lynn,

Laidy Chen Carrasco, Raymond Delgado,

Jonathan Ortiz, Jonathan Worrell,

Alex Barrios

Production: Partizan

10 Rue Vivienne

Paris, France

T. (33-1) 5345-0123

na@na.com

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

International Sales Agent: Kinology

US Sales Agent: William Morris Endeavor

Entertainment (WME)

(see page 448)

Teeming with rollicking charm and poignant drama, *The We and the I* sees Michel Gondry apply his unique style to a group of teenagers on their last day of school, as they ride a New York City bus the length of the Bronx to a summer of possibility and potential danger.

The whole production has a shaggy-dog, improvised feel and the story wends its way in a marvelously organic, occasionally goofy manner. But this frolic masks a deceptively complex work, an unfolding of multiple overlapping narratives on the subject of power and control. Gondry also embraces unexpectedly innovative formal techniques to serve his story, such as flashbacks replayed in real time on cellphones and playful stop-motion animation interventions that pull the viewer out of the work for just long enough to question who are the heroes, and who are the villains. The non-professional actors are charming; their lack of technique provides the film with a rare authenticity around actual teen behaviour little seen in our well-scrubbed *Glee*-niverse. (The film was actually developed out of a workshop Gondry did with these kids at an afterschool arts-and-activism programme.)

The central figure in the story is Teresa, a dropout trying to get back in with her gang—especially a churlish, sort-of boyfriend, Michael, who is among the top-dog bullies at the back of the bus. There's also Laidy Chen, crossing friends off the invite list to her sweet sixteen for minor bus-protocol infractions and encouraging her brothers' attempts to protect her honour, while her two gay friends Brandon and Luis discover the truth about

how each violated the other's trust. And then there's quiet Alex, seemingly lost in his book, who provides perspective when it's needed most. The sometimes harsh realities of low-income Bronx life are addressed head-on, but the film never feels anthropological. Gondry instead creates a total universe, where the best and worst of humanity plays out at an age that naturally evokes melodrama and comedy in the most sublime of ways.

NOAH COWAN



Michel Gondry was born in Versailles. He has directed music videos for Björk, Daft Punk, Radiohead, The Chemical Brothers and many others. His feature films include *Human Nature* (01), *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (04), which earned him an Academy Award® for Best Original Screenplay. *The Science of Sleep* (06), *Be Kind Rewind* (07), *The Green Hornet* (11) and *The We and the I* (12).