



Production Notes

Animals In Love

Directed by Laurent Charbonnier

Original score by Philip Glass

Release date: December 4, 2008

Running time: 85 minutes

Rated: G

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MC4 PRESENTS

ANIMALS IN LOVE

A FILM BY
Laurent Charbonnier

PRODUCED BY
Jean-Pierre Bailly

ORIGINAL SCORE BY
Philip Glass



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WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTOR

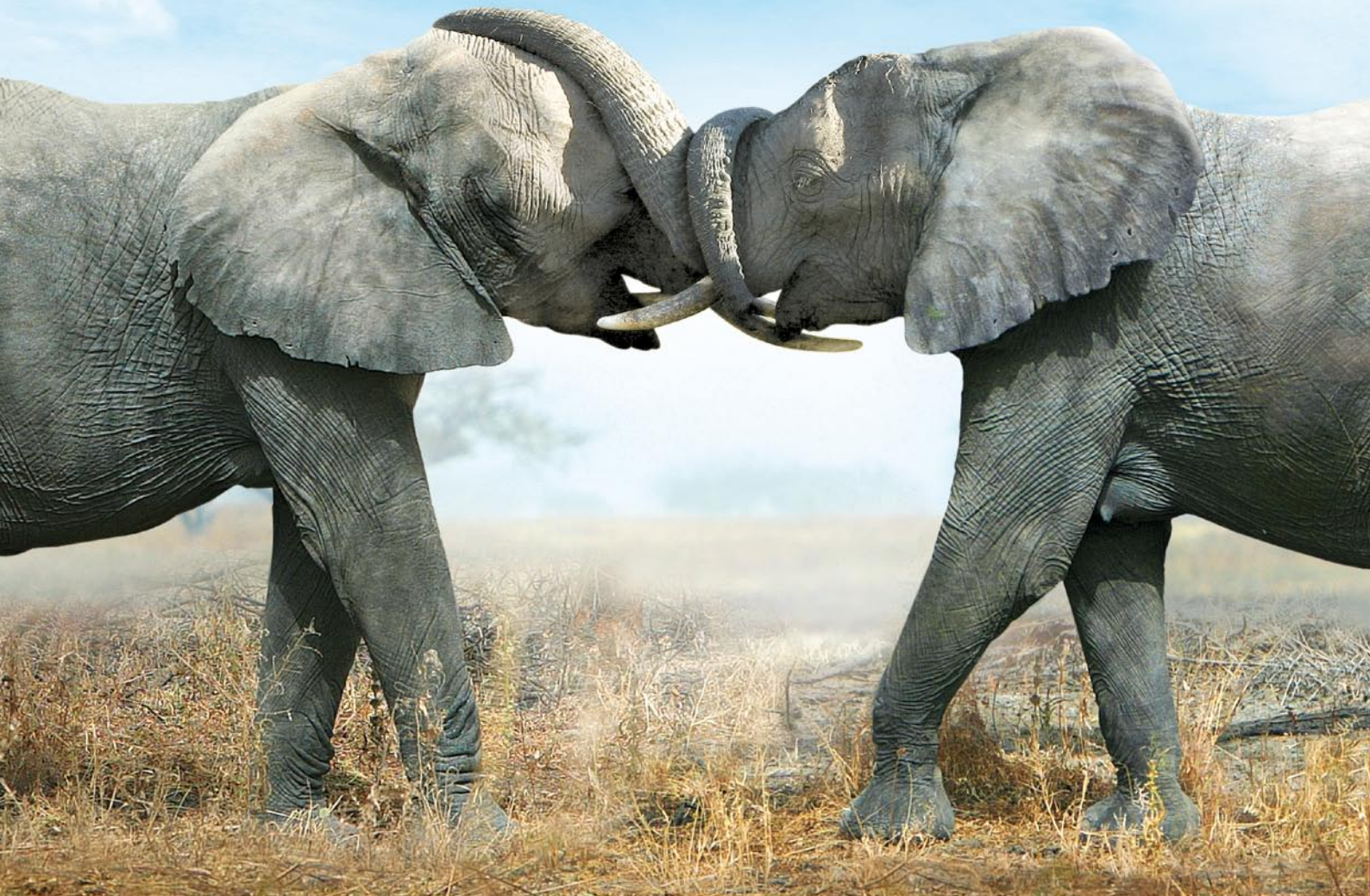
500 days of shooting.

80 hours of rushes.

170 species filmed – **80** appear in the final cut.

Temperatures ranging from **-30°C** to **+50°C**.

2 years of production over **16** countries.



Every season, the entire planet resonates with the songs, rails, squawks, screeches and calls of animals.

Dances and offerings are often the best ways to seduce, staging parades and musical numbers worthy of Broadway, sometimes comical, sometimes tender, but always spectacular.

Dolphins, lions, clown fishes, various birds, kangaroos, monkeys, crabs or insects : all work hard to pair and give life. Their love rituals are a mirror for the human behaviour.

With its touching and magnificent images, **Animals in Love** takes us all over the globe, inside the most extraordinary love stories ever told.



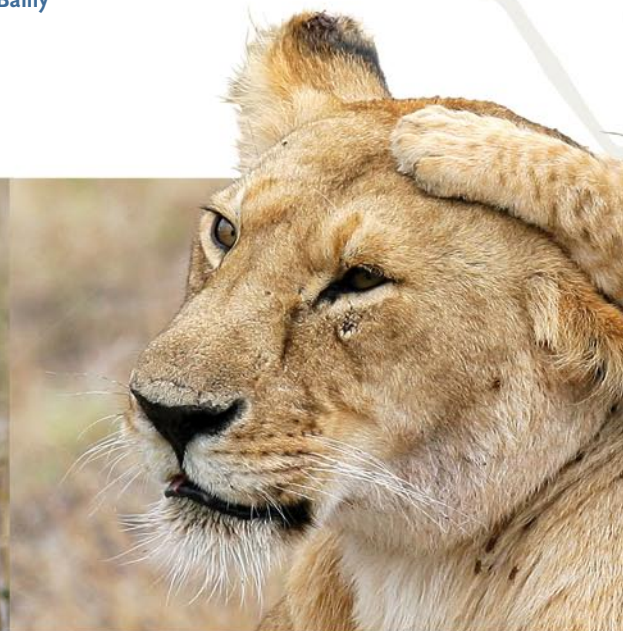
We've been working together with Laurent Charbonnier for over 10 years. He was part of the Last Trapper adventure, and that's when the project of Animals in Love was born. Laurent already had the epic scope of the movie in his mind.

One year of research was necessary to select the **most representative species**, the **most beautiful places** to shoot, and of course the **best seasons** to capture those moments.



Producer's note

Jean-Pierre Bailly



Then we had to adapt the movie equipment and technology to the choices we made.

We shot for two years, **always waiting, watching, hiding, sitting** in water, mud, on the peaks of trees, in air balloons. A long period under harsh climactic conditions and full of surprises.

What a reward when we discovered the images we had been working so hard to get!

Editing began early in the process to achieve the **sensory, positive, poetic and emotional** feel we intended.

The images, the voiceover (by Cécile de France in the French version) and the Philip Glass music **converge towards an enchanting opera**.

Our discreet and human take on the animal world has often reminded us of the behaviour of men and women. This movie brings back man to Nature. A nature to which he belongs along the other species.

Animals in Love and its **ecological approach** is also a way for us to fight for this urgent and major issue that is the **protection of biodiversity and nature**.



About the film

The movie presents various species at the different **stages of seduction**. The animals show up according to feelings, attitudes, and moments, not according to biological categories. As with humans, seduction is a **discussion between male and female**, sometimes successful and sometimes not. A deer in love can lose 30 % of its weight until the doe finally accepts him. But pride has no place when the survival of the species is at stakes.



Tenderness and affection abound, particularly with the urang-utangs, who never tire of caressing their companions. Hugs and kisses are also a part of the daily life of animals, as for humans.

Animals have **incredible talents** when it comes to seduce : **dancing, singing, fighting, building** elaborate nests, **offering** gifts, **creating** their own perfumes.

Then come the newborn babies, a peak of emotion. The parenting can be easy or difficult, but **always fascinating**.



Since he was a little kid, getting lost in the forests near his house, fascinated by nature shows on TV, Laurent Charbonnier dreamt of becoming a **filmmaker specialized in animals**. As a teenager, he studies photography first before switching to cinema, eager to tell stories, to catch the full jump of a frog.

He directs his first animal documentary in his early twenties with a camera he bought, without any help or producer. That segment is broadcast on the same show he watched religiously as a kid. **The dream has come true.**

Laurent Charbonnier works first for television, shooting impressive documentaries, even if it means staying awake for 90 nights to observe night owls. He shoots at least 40 documentaries of 26' or 52'.

Laurent Charbonnier

Director



In 1998, Jean Becker calls him for the animal sequences of his movie **Les Enfants du Marais** (Children of the Marshland). Laurent Charbonnier shoots for the first time on 35mm and will never go back.

He follows up with **Winged Migration**, where he is Director of Photography in charge of the wild birds. He continues with The Last Trapper, directed by Nicolas Vanier, filming bears, beavers, caribous...

Laurent Charbonnier shot the first sequences from Animals in Love just outside his home

in the French countryside, using for the first time a remote-controlled camera which allows him **to take the spectators into the animals' intimacy**, without ever being noticed.

Never ever the animals were disturbed on the production of Animals in Love. Laurent Charbonnier takes pride in the fact his crew works in a way birds can still feed their little ones and **leaves nature just as they found it.**



Operas, symphonies, compositions, film scores... Working with artists as different as Allen Ginsberg, Woody Allen, Twyla Tharp and David Bowie, Philip Glass is the **first musician to have worked in so many different genres**, from world music to pop-rock, from the classical dance scene to experimental theatre.

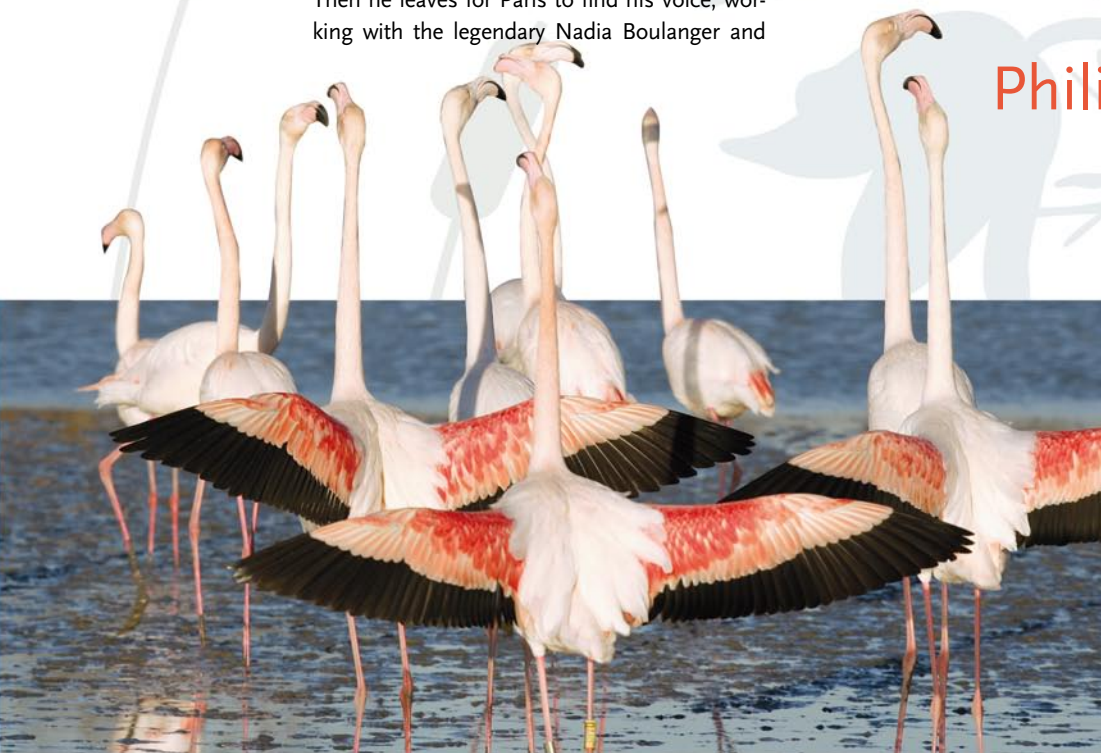
Born in 1937, he studies at Chicago University, the Juilliard School in New York and in Aspen. Then he leaves for Paris to find his voice, working with the legendary Nadia Boulanger and

Selective Filmography

2007 • Cassandra's Dream
2007 • Notes on a scandal
2006 • The Illusionist
2004 • Undertow
2004 • Secret Window
2004 • Taking Lives

2002 • The Hours
1998 • The Truman Show
1997 • Kundun
1992 • Candyman
1987 • Hamburger Hill
1984 • Mishima

Philip Glass



Ravi Shankar. In 1967, he moves back to New York and creates the Philip Glass Ensemble. Glass likes to define himself by his repetitive structures. Most of his compositions play with the iteration of themes, **immersing the listener in a spin**. He scored movies ranging from classic titles by Jean Cocteau to documentaries. He performs alone or with his Ensemble, gives conferences and workshops all over the world. With *Animals in Love*, he tried to reproduce the **immaculate state of nature**. A project he chose because he loves to work on

movies without dialogues. Here, he can also play with **the various songs and noises from the animal world**.

He singles out three main parts of his work on this movie. A main theme reflecting the **majesty of nature**. An “avian” dimension with wood instruments to give **a sense of flapping and twinkling**. The use of pairs of instruments – two clarinets, two trumpets – to mirror the images of animals in couples.

The idea was also to underscore the comical and ironic aspect of the wildlife.



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ANIMALS IN LOVE

INTRODUCTION

The gentle art of seduction is by no means the reserve of man. The animal kingdom offers many striking examples of courtship, with males and females displaying unexpected delicacy and subtlety, but also remarkable ingenuity, audacity and determination in pursuing and securing mates.

In many respects, animal behavior is reminiscent of our own, and this journey through the beautiful, fascinating, amusing world of animals in love cannot fail to strike a very familiar chord...

STRUCTURE OF THE FILM

The five senses: olfactory, auditory, visual, gustatory and tactile.

They provide a natural framework for the film, and we will explore the amorous techniques in each of the five categories.

1) THE SMELL, OR HOW TO FLATTER OLFATORY SENSES

While humans seldom rely on smell to seduce a partner, the practice is very common among animals. A given scent will tell females that a certain male is available, and vice-versa.

When the **doe** treads upon the forest, her fingers release a scent that will prove irresistible to males who will pick it up from quite a distance. Likewise in Africa, where **impalas** receive and send olfactory messages from one end of the savannah to the other. The **rhinoceros** also resorts to this technique, not just to attract females but also to remind fellow males of his supremacy. The same applies to a number of other animals (**badgers, civets, cheetahs**) of which we'll see a few brief examples.

One striking case is that of the **silkworm moth**, whose smell can be picked up by males 10 kilometers away, using huge antennae.

Of course scents also have aphrodisiac virtues, and when the male **impala** reviews his harem, he will choose the concubine that gives off the most promising perfume...

2) VOICE YOUR DESIRES, YOU'LL BE HEARD

The **stag's** throating may sound romantic to us and erotic to does, but in fact its main purpose is to warn other males off his territory. Should any one not heed this warning, the consequences are dire.

Singing of course is what birds do best, but many other animal species engage in vocal contests when they have no other attributes to show off.

Male **red cardinals** compete in song to earn the favors of the females; the resulting duet is of a rare beauty; conversely, the male **warbler** sings alone but so complex is his song that it sounds as if two voices were singing, in a harmony belied by the untidiness of his nest!

But the most touching example is that of the **emperor penguin**: first the male or the female engages in a solo song so as to locate his or her partner in the crowd. Each penguin has its

own signature tune, and finding the right mate is literally a matter of being on the same wavelength. When the two mates have found each other, they start a duo of sing and dance. When the female lays her eggs, she goes off to look for food while daddy looks after the brood.

The roar of the **lion** is a notorious call for love, supplemented by explicit positions adopted by the lioness in heat. The mating itself goes on for 4 days!

Toads croak in unison to indicate the whereabouts of groups of males; once a female locates such a group, it is up to the individual male to speak up, as it were, for himself...

Finally, a special mention should go to **humpbacked whales** whose love songs can be heard an astonishing 800 kilometers away!

3) SHOWING OFF: MALE ASSETS, FLYING COLORS AND OTHER VISUAL EFFECTS

“Look how handsome and healthy I am”, throats the **stag** as it proudly raises its antler-crowned head. Females are usually taken by this kind of display, promising strength and experience to ensure the well-being of progeny. We’ll see other brief examples of male posturing: **Jackson’s chameleon, the greater kudu, and the stag beetle.**

Strangers in the night: an interesting case is that of the **firefly**, which lights up in the dark to attract partners. Each species has its own flashing frequency and intensity so as to ensure recognition! We see a whole bush lit up like a Christmas tree.

Male **Australian cuttlefish** display their bright colors as well as their mesmerizing shapes, dancing in the water to entice the females. The latter signal their willingness to mate by taking on a marbled hue and curling up their arms. Male and female then engage in an unusual choreography before mating.

Still under water, the male **stickleback fish** displays a red throat to signal its capacity to defend the territory. The redder the better! Likewise the fighting fish who blushes in front of the coveted female.

Short of singing, birds of a feather flock together. Witness the **pink flamingoes**: their dress becomes pink because of the nutrients they absorb in saline marshes. The pinker they are, the stronger their immune systems. No wonder the females are drawn to the more colorful males... we see them doing just that.

And how about modern dance? Take a look at the **crested newt**, standing upside down and literally whipping the female until she finally makes up her mind.

Some animals join forces to lure the opposite sex... but when the female shows up, it’s every man for himself! Male **violin crabs** hang out in groups, raising their claws to show how big and virile they are. Passing females then take their pick. In the case of **garter snakes**, things are tougher: they bundle up into huge balls, hundreds of males vying for the attention of a single female. Now that’s competition!

The visual signals may convey little more than geographical information. The magnificent male **Jackson’s whydah** jumps high above the ground to indicate the exact location of its dwelling.

Not all animals go in for romantic courtship. Male **kangaroos** get straight to the point, fist-fighting their way to the females. The females are hardly more sentimental. When a baby is born the mother does nothing to help it into her pocket. Either it's fit enough to make it on its own... or it is left to die.

When it comes to fighting for sex, the most impressive of the lot are the **elephant** seals. Every male determines its territory, into which any wandering female becomes its property. The important thing is to keep intruders out! Fights can be fierce between the huge beasts, and when the winner finally takes its prize, the coupling of a 3-tonne heavyweight champion with a petite 500-kilogram beauty is quite a sight indeed...

4) GIFTS AND PRESENTS: A MATTER OF TASTE

If you are a powerful **stag**, a good antler-rattling, action-packed fight is quite a suitable way of impressing your fiancée. But what do you do if you're not Mr. Handsome? Well give the girl a present; it might just do the trick. Preferably something useful.

Bee-eaters usually present their loved one with an insect. Male **Oecanthus locusts** offer the girls a drink of their own making. The male **Hilara quadrivatta** fly catches its prey and bundles it up; while the female unwraps her gift, the male goes into action...

An interesting gift is the aphrodisiac perfume that the male **Hepialus butterfly** sprays onto the female to get her in the mood. The ritual was filmed at close up.

Everybody knows about the praying **mantis** devouring the male after copulation: talk about making a gift of oneself! But there are interesting variants: the **Xysticus cristatus spider** ties up the female before serving her and runs off before she gets a chance to free herself!

5) CARESSES: THE GENTLE TOUCH

But did you know that many animals caress their partners in their lovemaking? **Pygmy monkeys** display their desire not only by uttering all kinds of sounds, but also by gesturing in a most eloquent fashion. When they make love, they can be fast or slow, passionate or romantic, but always tender and never violent. Females encourage the tenderness by looking straight into their partners' eyes.

Nile Crocodiles also engage in tactile courtship, making the water ripple by vibrating their pectoral muscles. The female delicately rubs her muzzle against the male's, and then tickles his chin by spraying bubbles at him from underneath.

Parental solicitude is also found in **frogs**. Here the mother waits for her eggs to hatch before carrying the baby tadpoles one by one on her back to the nearest pond.

And while we are on the human vein, could it be that elephants weep tears of love? Such seems to be the case when you see big males in heat with a liquid hormonal substance oozing out of their eyes. Females express their own desire by lacing their urine with a potent message-bearing chemical. When at last a couple forms, the two giants exchange endless caresses with their trunks.

Neither an exhaustive nor a final compilation, the sequences in this film illustrate the amazing inventiveness of the animal kingdom in matters of love. Throughout our journey the stag

acted as our guide, introducing or closing sequences as they came and went. He was, in a way, the link between the world of animals and our own.