



Léa Seydoux in *La Belle Personne*

City of Lights, City of Angels film festival

Studio: COL•COA

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By Chris Tinkham



The 13th annual City of Lights, City of Angels (COL•COA) film festival, a weeklong showcase for new French films, is underway in Los Angeles this week. Although the AFI and Los Angeles film festivals remain the dominant programmed events in the city, COL•COA is the coziest and most fan-friendly. From the free Sunday screenings and \$5

student prices to the colorful ticket stubs that serve as raffle tickets for a trip to Paris, COL•COA is an industry-populated event that opens its arms to the public just the same. Like other festivals, COL•COA has an opening-night gala that, at \$100, is pricey for the average filmgoer, but this year's opening night film, *Someone I Loved*, will also be screened at the regular ticket price (\$10) on Saturday. Although tickets for screenings have been selling briskly, with many screenings already sold out, COL•COA's volunteer staff, in my experience, always has been accommodating to those of us willing to wait in standby lines. Here is a rundown of the films I've seen at the 2009 fest.

www.colcoa.org

Tuesday, April 21

Baby Love: In this sweet-natured romantic comedy, Philippe, a gay pediatrician (Pascal Elbé), desperately wants to become a father, but his boyfriend Manu (Lambert Wilson) has no interest in a life of domesticity. After befriending an Argentine design student (Pilar Lopez de Ayala) who finds herself in a jam, he propositions the girl to give birth to his baby. The arrangement triggers a series of comedic complications, but the film also raises valid questions about love, relationships and parenting.

La Belle Personne: Pouty students who look like Abercrombie models cut classes, juggle affairs and take young love far too seriously. The first half of the film has a cool chic that satisfies the stereotype of French films being both ponderous and erotically charged, but when a letter falls into the hands of the wrong person, the plot unhinges and the film becomes equally incoherent and implausible. The highlight is an extended look at actress Léa Seydoux, who will appear in Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* and Ridley Scott's *Robin Hood*.

Me Two: Daniel Auteuil is Jean-Christian, a reclusive, socially challenged accountant who gets hit by a car outside his office building. Behind the wheel was Gilles Gabriel (Alain Chabat), an egocentric '80s pop singer whose spirit gets stuck in Jean-Christian's body after the accident. The star power and odd-couple recipe at first seem promising, but the characters lack charm and the comedy never feels inspired. Some postscript scenes during the closing credits give a taste of how outrageous this film could have been.