

LUC BESSON

LUC BESSON (Director) began his career in cinema in 1977, working in a number of assistant director positions in France and the United States. These roles gradually positioned him as one of the few French directors and producers with an international scope.

In 1983, he directed his first feature film, 'The Last Battle', which earned him recognition at the Avoriaz Film Festival.

Two years later he directed 'Subway', starring Isabelle Adjani and Christopher Lambert. The French film industry rewarded him with three César Awards and the visual style that would define his early career was clearly established.

Building on his success, he undertook the direction of 'The Big Blue'. Though its reception at the Cannes Film Festival was mixed, the film gained 10 million admissions and went on to become a phenomenon with the cinema-going public.

Both 'La Femme Nikita' (1990) and 'Leon: the Professional' (1994) were similarly acclaimed by movie-goers and once again Besson's highly individual directorial style earned him a growing reputation, at home and internationally, as a gifted stylist and powerful storyteller.

Between these films, he directed 'Atlantis' (1991), a documentary aimed at raising awareness of the beauty of nature and the need to protect the environment.

In 1995 he helmed the extravagant science fiction epic 'The Fifth Element'. The blockbuster became one of the biggest box office hits of any French film in the United States. In 1998, Besson took home a César Award for Best Director.

In 1999 he directed his version of 'Joan of Arc', an undertaking that saw him gain yet another Best Director nomination at the César Awards.

He was named President of the Jury for the 53rd Cannes Film Festival in 2000, becoming the youngest jury president in the history of the festival.

Following that accolade Besson devoted much of the next five years to production, a move that eventually led to the foundation of his EuropaCorp studio, which since its launch has become one of the major production centres of the European film industry.

In 2005, he returned to directing with 'Angel-A', and the following year completed his first animated picture, 'Arthur and the Invisibles', adapted from his own book of the same name. Two sequels followed: 'Arthur and the Revenge of Maltazard' in 2009 and 'Arthur 3: The War of the Two Worlds' the following year.

In 2010, he also adapted Jacques Tardi's series of graphic novels with 'The Extraordinary Adventures of Adele Blanc-Sec', with Louise Bourgoin in the title role.

The following year marked the release of 'The Lady', starring Michelle Yeoh in the role of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi.

In 2013, he brought Tonino Benacquista's acclaimed novel 'Malavita' to the screen, with starring roles for Robert De Niro, Tommy Lee Jones and Michelle Pfeiffer, while last year he directed another science-fiction thriller, 'Lucy', starring Scarlett Johansson and Morgan Freeman.

In addition to the films he has directed, Besson has written over 20 major motion picture screenplays. Among

them are the 'Taxi' series and the recent 'Taken 2', which, as of today, lays claim to being the biggest box office hit of any French film in the US.