



## PORTRAITS & PARCOURS

### BIENVENUE SUR EMLYON FOREVER!

Le portail des membres à vie et  
diplômés EMLYON

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#### Michel Duran (MBA 90), actor and director

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##### **Going from pole vaulting in Saint -Etienne, France, to feature film directing on the Pacific Northwest coast in Vancouver is an amazing journey!**

"Film and theatre, like sport, are entertainment businesses that have at their center, exceptional personal control, effort and character."

I grew up in gymnasiums since 3 years old... My mother was a physical education teacher and with my brothers after school, we enjoyed playing basket ball, soccer or jumping on gymnastic mats while waiting for her meetings to be over. Since then, I've always been involved in sport related activities. First in high school in a track and field enhanced program in Saint-Etienne, then in a Sport science/kinesiology Master to acquire the necessary technical knowledge.

Finally, I joined the MBA program at EMLYON. I wanted to acquire business skills in order to apply them for high performance sports equipment.

The time spent at EMLYON really fulfilled my expectations and allowed me to work on different marketing and products/events development positions: as a developer of training ergometers for climbers like Patrick Edlinger, treadmills involved in explosive power measurement dedicated to sprinters and American football players (one treadmill was installed in Phoenix, Arizona), as an organizer of a round the world expedition mixing sport challenges, scientific research and business promotion, as a coach of the national backcountry ski team and as a technical marketer for high performance sports equipment.

##### **Moving to North America**

And then in 1997, a radical change occurred: The move to Vancouver, on the Canadian West coast. We applied for the landed migrant status and were accepted. Why Vancouver? Well again, childhood related stories of uncles living in Montréal and Washington DC, I always dreamed about it...

The dream became reality January 11, 1997 when landing in the Vancouver airport with two young kids (3 and 5 years old) running around, way more excited to arrive in this new country than their parents. Although we were prepared as much as we could, at the time the only thing we had was our good will and our personal belongings in a container. The first four years were really challenging but so empowering. We had to let go our French way of thinking. Almost everybody in Vancouver is a new comer with the necessity to adapt to a new life. Not much time to self indulge, but Vancouver is a very vibrant city. I compare this city to a teenager, frantic sometimes but always with the purpose to explore new approaches. Globally we were happy in this new life, but I still remember lots of nights, my eyes wide open towards the ceiling, wandering why I decided to move in these new territories... Then bit by bit, life started to provide enjoyable moments and we decided to settle down for good.

In 2001, through my consulting activities in personal training and business development, and the meeting of Kamal Derkaoui, a Director of Photography, freshly arrived from Morocco and trained at the prestigious Moscow film academy, I started exploring new professional areas in the film industry and theatre. I was at the point where I was missing the performance. In sport, at one point you reach your maximum, while you can act almost till the end of your life.

##### **CMHL Enterprises and Théâtre de l'Arbre Perché. [www.cmhlenterprises.com](http://www.cmhlenterprises.com) [www.tap-theatre.com](http://www.tap-theatre.com)**

Acting is a very volatile activity in terms of money making. In order to decrease uncertainty and develop new projects, CMHL Enterprises, a production company was set in 2004 and in 2006, the Théâtre de l'Arbre Perché. We started with short films: The Window, in 2006; California Balloons, in 2009 and a Moliere play: Sganarelle or the Imaginary Cuckold, in English, with a live baroque orchestra followed by a French Wine and Cheese tasting. I felt quite proud when listening to an anglophone comment saying that Moliere was "better than Shakespeare because more fun!".

Since the inception of these two structures, I measured the experience acquired along a quite atypical professional life and how the MBA was pertinent. Each film or theatre project is a small enterprise with its financial challenges, human resources management, marketing and communication. These first projects allowed on one hand to validate the artistic approach and on the other hand to fine tune the business.

##### **Soufflé au Chocolat: first feature film and partnership with chocolate**

[masters.www.souffleauchocolat.com](http://masters.www.souffleauchocolat.com)

In 2010, following the Moliere play DVD, we produced the feature film Soufflé au Chocolat. We started the project in February and by the end of August the shoot was completed. The different steps of this full scale production as an actor, co-director and screenwriter was one of the most exhilarating experiences. 2011 was used for the postproduction and its premiere in Vancouver in November 2011. The movie has been screened at the Film market at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival.

We are currently developing partnerships with chocolate masters and chocolate production companies to join forces for the promotion of the movie, the chocolate talents and sponsors. The first test in real condition at the Vancouver premiere was a great success and we are developing the concept through the various geographical markets of the movie.

#### **Other productions and projects in development.**

This first feature film was followed by another one: Truth, a horror psychological thriller, with a similar approach as the Shinning by Kubrick, in English, in which I played Jasper, a painter from the New York in the 50s.

Several projects are in development. Each of them are linked to French origins, either by the story or by the French accent of one of the actors...

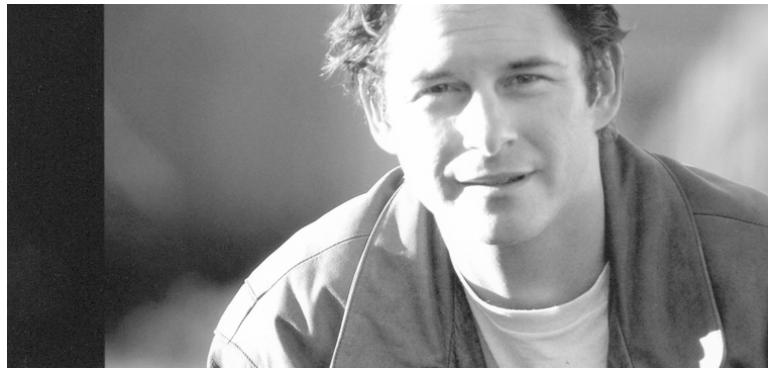
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