



Fraîche Face

Actor, director and cute
Lancôme pitchman Mathieu
Kassovitz comes to Ameri-
ca with the
French hit film, *Amélie*.

by Lorie Caval

"I am very jealous because this guy, he is very lazy!" teases celebrated French director Jean-Pierre Jeunet (*Delicatessen*, *The City of Lost Children*) of the co-star of his new film *Amélie*. "Everything is so easy for him. During the shooting he did the editing for his film, and on the weekend he did work on two commercials!" he laughs. Said co-star, Mathieu Kassovitz is certainly multi-talented, appearing in films like *The Fifth Element*, *Jacob The Liar*, and now in Jeunet's romantic comedy *Amélie* (as Nino Quicampoix), along with adorable starlet Audrey Tautou (as Amélie Poulain). The Miramax Zoé movie about a young woman on a mission to anonymously transform the lives of the people in her quaint Parisian neighborhood has already broken box office records in France to the tune of the equivalent of nearly \$40-million. *Amélie* is due out in the States on November 2nd, with much ado.

Kassovitz's self-described "cartoon character" face has even scored a contract to be a spokesperson for Lancôme cosmetics as a result of *Amélie*'s success. But the young jack of all trades intends on truly mastering just one

craft—directing. "I have lots of projects and I don't know which one is going to come out first," explains the director who's been called the "Spike Lee of France." "I have a family now, so I'm taking care of my family and I'm trying not to work next year to be able to write a good script," Kassovitz says.

With a bundle of awards under his belt such as Cannes' Best Director for *La Haine* [*The Hate*], Kassovitz is still able to step aside and let directing mentors like Jeunet take the reigns. Later this year he'll star with Nicole Kidman, Ben Chaplin (*Washington Square*), and Vincent Cassel (*Elizabeth*) in Jez Butterworth's *Birthday Girl*. "It's like you try to be a loose puppet because you know that you have a good puppet-master. You have to let go," says Kassovitz. "Plus, because I do something else [directing], I don't really care. I'm not looking to make a career out of this [acting]. That is the strongest statement that an actor can have: I don't give a shit, I'm here, shoot your movie, I'll do my thing, don't worry." ■