# LOUIS CYR; L'HOMME LE PLUS FORT DU MONDE

## *LOUIS CYR; THE STRONGEST MAN IN THE WORLD*

French with English subtitles

http://ca.eonefilms.com/films/louis-cyr

Directed by: Daniel Roby
Genre: biopic
Country of origin: Québec
Runtime: 130 min.

## SYNOPSIS

Like many Quebeckers fleeing poverty, Louis Cyr came with his parents to Lowell, Mass. in 1878. He worked in the New England Mill to help feed his brothers and sisters. One day he lifts a 514 pounds rock in front of a mesmerized group of people.
This is the start of a brilliant career: Louis Cyr breaks all records in weight lifting competition to become the strongest man in the world. He performs on stage lifting 8 people standing on a table on his back. He continues juggling between competitions and shows. Ultimately he wants to prove his extraordinary strength by taming four restless horses that try to run away from him.
Louis Cyr gets married with a woman who loves books and arts while Louis hides the fact that he cannot read nor write. Louis Cyr wants to spare his daughter Emiliana the pain of being illiterate so he gives her the best education possible discouraging her at the same time from following his footsteps as a circus performer.
Louis Cyr is soon nicknamed the Canadian Samson. In the film Louis Cyr is portrayed as an honest, straightforward man whose toughest battles take place outside the arenas and stages as he shows his emotional vulnerability.
In Quebec, Louis Cyr with his uncontested records remains the legendary folk hero with an exceptional strength and heart.

## REVIEWS

"Louis Cyr: The Strongest Man in the World" tells the inspiring story of a man who went through the fame and glory of being the strongest, to the end of his life where we see him struggle to keep the title he had worked so hard for. We also get to see a touching love story between Cyr and his wife as well as experience his relationship with his daughter. This is a 20th century biopic you do not want to miss by *Olivia Pierratos*
http://www.weeatfilms.com/film_reviews/movie-review-louis-cyr-strongest-man-world-must-see/

(…) it's a well-made appealing bio-pic of the legendary Quebec strongman, anchored by a stellar performance from thespian strongman Antoine Bertrand. (…)
http://blogs.montrealgazette.com/2013/07/15/louis-cyr-had-a-solid-opening-weekend/

(…) Antoine Bertrand is particularly attractive in the lead role, dialing the character's grandeur up or down when necessary. While he plays the quiet scenes with depth, it is his ability to bring out the overtly strong personality Louis exuded which leaves the more lasting impression. Married to his aura of power is a degree of decency, of kindness and the desire to be good towards friends and family. Bertrand's performance makes Louis inherently likable (…)
(…) People can take away what they will from Daniel Roby's film. If it is the sense of sweep and excitement derived from the concept of a man proving his might, then *Louis Cyr* is solid entertainment by *Edgar Chaput*
http://www.soundonsight.org/louis-cyr-lhomme-le-plus-fort-du-monde-has-brawn-and-heart-if-not-brawn-and-brain/

## DETAILS

### LANGUAGE

The language is familiar at times reflecting the social classes of the characters. For instance, there is a difference between the way Louis Cyr's family speaks and the way Gustave Lambert or Richard Kyle, his promoters, express themselves.
The hostility between Quebeckers and Irish shows up in slurs like "*face de carotte*" in French [Carrot face] repeated a few times especially at the beginning of the film. Louis's younger brother brags about the strength of his brother and uses somewhat aggressive vocabulary such as "he can kick your ass".
But on the whole, the French dialogues with their English subtitles are not dominated by vulgarity. However, as the film shows a lot of lifting, grunting and screaming accompany Louis Cyr's herculean efforts.

### VIOLENCE

Before Louis Cyr demonstrates his extraordinary strength at a young age, he attends boxing matches. Brief shots are shown of boxers punching each other, one falling. It is a very restrained portrayal of a violent sport with non-graphic details. The boxing sequences as well as the training later in the film are integral to the plot. They provide the mixed background where Louis Cyr evolves: sport competition and circus.
The sequence with the horses suggests a lot of strain on Louis Cyr's body and his efforts to control the restless horses appear superhuman. Some whipping of the horses is heard and seen from a distant shot. No graphic detail, no close shots of the horses.

### NUDITY

None

### SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Kissing and affectionate gestures between husband and wife (Louis and Melina)

### PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

- The poverty at the beginning shows the struggle of a family trying to make ends meet to feed the children, to find a doctor for the little girl. The landscape is very industrial with the smoking stacks and the little houses stuck to each other with people living "like cattle".
- The lack of money leads people to choose cheap coffins even if they are too small for the deceased.
- The upside of that harsh reality is the bond between Louis and his siblings and how he comforts his sister, hangs around with his younger brother and gives his wages to the family. The film points out the warmth and kindness of Louis.
- In spite of his good heart and honesty, the first promoter robs him and Melina of 6 months salary. They will take their revenge by being successful in their endeavours.

- Louis Cyr is illiterate: he is ashamed so he hides it from everybody that is why he shuns his fans who solicit his autograph.. Louis Cyr does try to learn which is very positive.

- The harshness of show biz: Louis Cyr would like to compete with Eugene Sandau on straight strength but Sandau's promoter imposes gimmicks like acrobatics. Louis is taunted by Richard Kyle who betrays him by endorsing another "strong man": this is hurtful for Louis.
- Louis Cyr obsesses about being the strongest man in the world. He risks his health and his relationship with his entourage in order to prove again and again that he is the strongest.
- It is sad to see the decline of Louis Cyr's health for a man who has enjoyed the reputation justly won of the strongest man in the world.
- Louis clashes with Emiliana over her career and ambition. He wants to protect her from the harshness and betrayals he went through. She wants to fulfill her desire to emulate her dad. But the sadness of it all is that at the end, she left Louis without giving him the pleasure to hear her play the piano he especially bought for her.
- The tears Emiliana sheds are bittersweet, as she finally understands the love and generosity of her father towards her but also towards the world.
- The friendship described between Horace Barré and Louis Cyr is heart-warming and touching as Horace respects Louis who becomes his mentor.

## PICTURE GALLERY FROM THE FILM

www.radio-canada.ca
Louis is about to lift the 514 lbs rock attended by his young brother

http://patwhite.com/node/16357
Louis and his mother

www.lapresse.ca
Louis performing on stage

http://elephant.canoe.ca/films/louis-cyr-l-homme-le-plus-fort-du-monde_84841/
Louis Cyr and his wife welcoming their baby daughter Emiliana

www.radio-canada.ca

Louis Cyr testing hos strength against horses

www.tylerhallstunts.com

Louis Cyr, the strongest man in the world