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When he was just 28 Mathieu Kassovitz won the Best Director award at the Cannes film festival for his controversial movie "La Haine". Kassovitz says the best way to see the city is on the back of a motor scooter. Since then he has melted hearts playing Nino in "Amélie" and has made his mark in Hollywood as an actor and a director, starring in Steven Spielberg's "Munich" and directing psychological horror "Get Out".

# Padore ma Paris

By Mark Tutton  
Staff Writer, CNN

Photographs By Annie Leibovitz & Nigel Cossom

**M**y City, My Life spoke to Kassovitz about movie-making, creativity and life in Paris. We get an in-depth interview about his times in Paris and what inspires him.

make it change. Stylistically talking, I think Parisians have a pretty good sense of taste and they know how to handle themselves. And I think French people, the Parisians especially, are kind of classy.

**CNN:** Your characters are always telling interesting anecdotes and little stories. Where does that come from?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** Biography, Kassovitz and Klapisch: Why we love Paris, Paris: City overview, Paris City Guide

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** All those anecdotes are really part of what we are in France. We like to talk a lot, we like to scrutinize everything and just not let it go that fast. So we question everything, everything we do, everything that we see, and that's part of our culture.

**CNN:** You're pretty big time now, why are you still here and not living in the Hollywood Hills?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** Why am I still here? Because this is the most beautiful city in the world! I wouldn't live in L.A. for any money in the world; it's no relationship, no comparison. Paris is a city with soul, it's a city with a past. You can feel it everywhere and I'm a part of it, I can't avoid it.

**CNN:** Are there any places you'd go to relax or just reflect on what you are doing?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** No, in the city here, no, no, no. You know, my take on the city is that there is no specific place: the whole thing is crazy, the whole thing is inspirational. I don't go to places, I just drive around and I see things. I look at people more than the buildings -- and that's what makes stories.

**CNN:** What is it that makes it stay the same, what's its heartbeat that makes Paris?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** The heartbeat is Parisians. Parisians are obnoxious and impolite and everything you can imagine about them. But they are also very co-operative within themselves and are pretty open to everything else.

**CNN:** Do you think that there's one place in Paris that stands out amongst the others?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** I think what I like about

Paris are unknown and unnamed little streets that are not on the map, and the history that goes with it.

**CNN:** Do you think that you truly have to be part of a city, to share a history with it, to truly represent it as a director?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** You have to know what you are talking about. It's interesting to go to a city that you don't know about and try to represent it but I don't think that you'll be able to bring the soul of the city in the movie. It takes a lot of time for me to get to another city -- anywhere in the world -- and like it, because I like this one so much and I know it so much that this is home. Anywhere else is not home.

**CNN:** If Paris was a person, how would you describe it to friends?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** A good-looking girl with a big mouth -- very loud.

### *More My Life, My Stories: A Look Into Paris Life from an American's Perspective*

**CNN:** What has made the city so special to you?

**Meg:** Even though I've been here for a while, I feel like Paris is inexhaustible. I doubt I'll ever make it to all the restaurants that I want to try or half of the exhibitions that I'd like to see. There's always more monuments, markets that I haven't yet tried and a neighborhood that I haven't yet walked. In the three plus years that I've been here, I can't really say I've ever been bored.

The other thing I love about the city is its walkability, or, with the implementation of the new city bike program, its bikeability. It's just such a pleasure making my way across the city with music blaring and watching people -- it's great, it becomes addictive.

To read more on Meg's interview go to:  
<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/TRAVEL/06/04/paris.blogger/index.html>



Photo By Nigel Cossom  
Mathieu Kassovitz on set directing Amelie.

**CNN:** How does it feel to be part of Paris film history and growing up in the birthplace of modern cinema?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** It's very inspirational to have seen all these movies that made French movie history and film history, period, and being able to go to the same places and see where all these pre-war movies were made. Paris is still the same as it was, so the spirit is the same also and it's kind of elevating for us directors to be in a town with a city soul, a lot of soul. So it gives you a lot of opportunities and ways of not just showing a city, but the spirit of that city; so that's what we keep on doing today.

**CNN:** What do you think it is about Paris that encourages creativity in people?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** Buildings are, of course, amazing and locations are so cinematic that it's a pleasure for a director to shoot in a town like that. But especially the spirit of it, and the spirit of the Parisians, the way the city coexists with everybody and that mixture of different people and of different backgrounds. All that makes Paris inspirational for us.

**CNN:** What was it that made you decide to become a film-maker?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** Becoming a film-maker was, I think, a decision that I took while watching movies. It's just a way to express myself and a way to just try to bring to people when I walk around a city, when I see something. I became a director because I am urban: I live in a very urban and fast city. You go from place to place and you never stay in one place and that's what gives you the energy. And it's so cinematic, you can't avoid it.

**CNN:** Are Parisians the most stylish people in the world and are the men really the most romantic?

**Mathieu Kassovitz:** I think that men are not romantic anywhere in the world and Paris won't



## BARE AND STRONG

Inspired from the 1970s disco era, bold-metal pieces with a simple look. On model Karma Jones Carrier metal alloy bracelet, \$450; Alexander McQueen golden metallic glove, \$233; Valentino mesh silver metal dress, \$6,969.

Fashion Editor:  
Mark Paducei

# EVENING ELEMENTS

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSE AUSTIN



**CHAINMAIL LOOSE FIT**

Looking fierce a night is a must but,  
with comfort. On Jones: Chanel  
Chainmail metal sports jacket, \$1,465;  
Betsey Johnson liquid leggings, \$53;  
Christian Louboutin Italian leather  
pumps, \$452.

FIERCE  
RESTRICTED  
SPORTY  
URBAN  
SHARP

HARD  
LUSTER  
STRONG  
BOLD  
SIMPLE



**SHARP YET STRUCTURED**

On Jones: Versace Metal Squared  
Chained tube dress, \$1,568; Christian  
Siriano cropped ruffle jacket, \$233.

**SIMPLY CHIC**

One can look strong and bold, even if you have a girly side. On Jones: Oscar De La Renta stringed layer cocktail dress, \$7,983; Harry Winston black leather cuff, \$573, Vera Wang opal black tights, \$130.



CHIC

ELEGANT

SMART

BROAD

YOUTHFUL



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