

Preface

This volume arose from a panel at the Popular European Cinema conference entitled 'The Spectacular', held in the University of Warwick in March 2000, where Stella Bruzzi, Susan Hayward, and Phil Powrie each gave a paper on the films of Luc Besson. We are very grateful to Ginette Vincendeau and Richard Dyer for allowing us to do this. Susan Hayward and Phil Powrie subsequently commissioned papers from a wide range of international scholars to continue the work done by Susan Hayward in her 1998 book on Besson. The editors are grateful to the contributors to this volume for their commitment to popular French cinema.

Note that when Besson's films are mentioned in this volume, only the original French title is given, on the assumption that readers will be familiar with those films. We give the translated titles here for the films made by Besson as a director, and which are considered in detail in this volume; all other details for the films are given in the filmography at the end of the volume. English titles for all other non-English films are given in the text.

1983	<i>Le Dernier combat</i>	(<i>The Last Battle</i>)
1985	<i>Subway</i>	
1988	<i>Le Grand bleu</i>	(<i>The Big Blue</i>)
1990	<i>Nikita</i>	(<i>La Femme Nikita</i> [USA])
1994	<i>Léon</i>	(<i>Leon</i> [GB]; <i>The Professional</i> [USA])
1997	<i>Le Cinquième élément</i>	(<i>The Fifth Element</i>)
1999	<i>Jeanne d'Arc</i>	(<i>The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc</i>)

The reader will also find a select bibliography at the end of the volume.