

a Cinema Guild release



2023 / 108 min / 1.85:1 / DCP / 5.1 / Color  
In Greek and English with English subtitles

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Press Materials:

[http://www.cinemaguild.com/theatrical/music\\_press.html](http://www.cinemaguild.com/theatrical/music_press.html)

## SYNOPSIS

A quietly colossal achievement from one of contemporary cinema's preeminent image makers. On a stormy night in the mountains of Greece, a pair of wayward young people abandon their newborn child. Taken in by a family of farmers, Jon grows up without knowing his father or mother. Years later, after a tragic accident, he is sent to prison, where he meets Iro. The two form a connection, expressed through music, that will, by turns, haunt them and uphold them the rest of their days. Freely inspired by the story of Oedipus, Angela Schanelec's latest is as terrifying as myth and as gentle as a folk song.

## CREDITS

### Cast

Aliocha Schneider.....Jon  
Agathe Bonitzer.....Iro  
Marisha Triantafyllidou.....Merope  
Argyris Xafis.....Elias  
Frida Tarana.....Phoebe at 6 years old  
Ninel Skrzypczyk.....Phoebe at 14 years old  
Miriam Jakob.....Marta  
Wolfgang Michael.....Hugh  
Finn-Henry Reyels.....Ezra

### Crew

Angela Schanelec.....writer, director, editor  
Ivan Markovic.....photography  
Rainer Gerlach.....sound  
Dimitris Apostolou & Bohdan Graczyk...assistant directors  
Ingo Klier.....production design  
Anette Guthier.....costumes  
Monika Münnich, Mina Ghorraishi.....makeup  
Makis Gazis & Nadia Fedorova.....casting  
Panos Karabinos, Romana Janik.....production manager  
Kirill Karasovski.....producer  
François d'Artemare  
Vladimir Vidic & Nataša Damjanovic...co-producers  
Giorgos Karnavas &  
Konstantinos Kontovrakis.....executive producers

A Shellac international presentation

In coproduction with WDR/Arte, Les Films de L'Après-Midi, Dart Film

In association with Heretic

U.S. Distribution: Cinema Guild

## **INTERVIEW WITH ANGELA SCHANELEC**

by Mikhail Ratgauz

### **What led to your decision to deal with Oedipus? What got you started?**

There are questions in my life, and thus also in my films, to which I have no answers. They relate to family and family relationships as well as to fate, or mere chance, that determines us and to which we must bow. The myth of Oedipus encompasses all of this, including the pain of it all. And there was also a theater production that I saw as a very young actress.

### **Sophocles' Oedipus in the Hölderlin version as directed by Jürgen Gosch, right?**

Yes. The cast played with cothurns (e.g. platform boots Greek tragedy actors wore on stage) and large masks. The stage consisted of a staircase leading up to a tent with a simple slit for an entrance. Oedipus forced himself out of this slit at every entrance and then back again through it at the end of the scene. Due to the limited and restricted movements, which were made even harder by the cothurns, this production was very physical. It made you physically feel his pain. His whole existence seemed painful to me.

### **So there's a way from this pain to music?**

Yes. Due to the pain, there was a reason, a necessity for music. I find the thought that we can survive, or that we can succeed in enduring our lives or fates... How should I put it? It's a fantastic thought. Here Jon develops the capacity of facing his fate, and that is singing. He sings.

### **Your most radical break with the classical myth is that Oedipus, in your version Jon, never finds out about his origins or his guilt; he's spared this knowledge.**

Yes. It's how the story developed as I wrote. Even if Sophocles was my starting point, during the writing process, characters emerged – as they did in my other films – who were human beings rather than mythical figures. I spare Jon the extent of knowledge so that he doesn't have to stab out his eyes as Oedipus does. He loses his eyesight over many years and doesn't live as a blind man in the forest after Jocasta's death, but instead with his daughter and among people. I am not interested in what makes the myth unique, but rather in what it can tell us today. I'm interested in what I can share with everyone, the normal and the relatable. Everything else lies in the unconscious of the character, which is also from where Jon's singing arises.

### **But you don't spare Jocasta, who's called Iro in the film. Ultimately, this means her death.**

Jon has nothing to repress because he knows nothing and is unaware of his past. Iro does, however. She hopes, fears, represses and dies when the limits of what she can endure have been overstepped.

### **What was important for you with Lucian, the character Laius in the myth?**

To me, Lucian epitomizes the tragic figure because he has no chance, he's innocent, yet must meet his fate. To save the mother, he abandons his child after birth. This failing destroys him; that is, he no longer has a code by which to abide, no longer knows how to act as part of society, and finally dies because of it – at the hands of a son he doesn't know. He sees this young man and feels an attraction, wants to kiss him.

**It seems to me that your film language is also very much altered by the import of myth. The imagery is far denser.**

I think you're referring to the silence. The narrative develops through that which goes unsaid; it emerges because there's no language for it. It was a matter of finding images for incidents for which, in my opinion, there are no words. As in life. One does something and remains silent about it. This is simply human. Language is an attempt to break a silence, but it's only an attempt. Our lives are full of failed communication.

**In *Music*, you again work elliptically. The distance between the remote locations and the elapsed times is as easily bridged in your film as was the case in the theater of yore, in Shakespeare, say...**

Omission doesn't mean that something hasn't occurred, it only means that it wasn't seen. Nobody questions that in theater. Of course you can say the film is what you saw on the screen, but the images only came about because certain omissions were decided on. Everyone's actually aware of this, and if you consider the editing process, then it's more obvious still. Omission is a prerequisite of narration. Everything follows from omission: the locations I can go to, the time I can let pass.

**I'd like to return to music. The songs that Jon sings are by Doug Tielli. How did you find him?**

It was a long quest. The music Jon sings in the second part is his true language, but I couldn't write it. I imagined it, but it was very difficult for me to put into words. I listened to music for more than a year until I came across Doug Tielli, who lives in rural Canada and whom I then met in Toronto. After our encounter he sent me songs he was working on and hadn't yet released. I never doubted the decision to go with his music, it was a stroke of luck for me - as was the cast: Aliocha Schneider and Agathe Bonitzer, Marisha Triantafyllidou and Argyris Xafis. These were all very fortunate encounters, also with the other actors in Greece. Because there's so much silence in the film, the focus on faces, bodies and movement increases - everything emerges from these actors and from nature.



## **DIRECTOR'S BIO**

Born in 1962, writer-director Angela Schanelec first worked as a theater actress before she began making films. Her films, including *My Sister's Good Fortune* (1995), *Places in Cities* (1998), *Marseille* (2004), *Orly* (2010), *The Dreamed Path* (2016), and *I Was at Home, But...* (2019), premiered at Berlinale, Cannes and Locarno and have won numerous awards, among them the Silver Bear for Best Director at the 2019 Berlinale. *Music*, her ninth feature film, won the Silver Bear for Best Screenplay at the 2023 Berlinale.

## **FILMOGRAPHY**

1991 *Lovely Yellow Color* (short)  
1992 *Far Away* (short)  
1992 *Prague, March '92* (short)  
1993 *I Stayed in Berlin All Summer* (medium length)  
1995 *My Sister's Good Fortune*  
1998 *Places in Cities*  
2001 *Passing Summer*  
2004 *Marseille*  
2007 *Afternoon*  
2009 *First Day* (short)  
2010 *Orly*  
2014 *Princip, Text* (short)  
2016 *The Dreamed Path*  
2019 *I Was at Home, But...*  
2023 *Music*

## **AWARDS & FESTIVALS**

WINNER, Silver Bear for Best Screenplay, Berlinale  
WINNER, Best Direction & Best Cinematography, Valladolid International Film Festival  
Official Selection, Toronto International Film Festival  
Official Selection, New York Film Festival  
Official Selection, BFI London Film Festival  
Official Selection, CPH:DOX  
Official Selection, Mar del Plata International Film Festival  
Official Selection, Viennale  
Official Selection, Busan International Film Festival  
Official Selection, AFI Fest  
Official Selection, Festival du Nouveau Cinema  
Official Selection, IndieLisboa  
Official Selection, Hong Kong International Film Festival  
Official Selection, Istanbul Film Festival