

# Programme Notes



Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> and Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November 19:30

## Anatomy Of A Fall (12A)



When Samuel is found dead outside his family's chalet in the Alps, the police and courts must try to establish if he fell, jumped or was pushed. If he was pushed, the only suspect is his wife Sandra (the impeccable Sandra Hüller), and her motives are debated. But if he jumped, her actions and the status of their marriage will be examined in similar detail.

The film follows the police investigation and then turns into a courtroom drama, as Sandra seeks to prove her innocence. She

also wants to protect her 11-year-old son from learning too much about his parents' complicated marriage. We see how police investigation, court procedure and maternal protection can all obscure the truth as well as bringing it to the fore. A deep psychological dive into the complexities of human life.

Justine Triet's thrilling examination of a marriage, a family and a death won the Palme d'Or at Cannes Film Festival 2023. In fact, the superb Sandra Hüller (Toni Erdmann) stars in the winners of the two top films at Cannes: *Anatomy of a Fall* and *Zone of Interest*. In both films, her powerful performances offer nuance and brilliant insight.

### Reviews

*Justine Triet's brilliantly thorny and elusive new film [is] an expansive but consistently riveting ... emotional procedural, less concerned with cold facts than with multiple parties' fluid, permeable ideas of the truth, and the ellipses between them ... The filmmakers' fixation on untidy ambiguities is matched by Hüller's astonishing performance as a woman who would likely stand her ideological ground as intensely if she were guilty as if she were innocent ... Deliberate and elegant in form, but with a fast heartbeat under its serenity, Anatomy of a Fall gives its audience plenty of space to breathe and gaze and ponder matters less immediate than simply whodunnit - though you may be arguing with yourself over that, too, for days to come. **Guy Lodge, Film of the Week***

*Justine Triet's gripping, sharply intelligent psychological drama collects itself in fizzing arcs of strange electricity around a brilliant, edgy but elusive Sandra Hüller ... What is really being dissected is the mystery that is other people's passions. Where does responsibility lie when a marriage sours? Did love fall away, did it jump, or was it pushed? ... every piece of evidence is opened to opposing, equally plausible interpretations, and the credibility of each witness, especially Sandra, becomes more important than the facts ... Between the absolute poles of 'guilty' and 'not guilty' lies a many-shaded spectrum of culpability and complicity. In vivid, clean lines, Anatomy of a Fall navigates this moral morass and exposes the absurdity of trying to pluck from it a simplistic, binary verdict. Is Sandra a loving mother, a murderous wife, an egotistical creator, a guilt-ridden destroyer? Tick all that apply. Triet handles with magnificent certainty the feeling/fact that none of the great three-word statements – I love you, I hate you, I forgive you, I am sorry – exists to the exclusion of any of the others. **Jessica Kiang, Sight and Sound***

*With the film's two-and-a-half-hour running time, the ambiguity could become tiresome, but thanks to a perceptive script delivered by a strong cast, including a charismatic turn by Swann Arlaud as Sandra's lawyer — plus a scene-stealing performance from Messi the border collie as Daniel's canine companion Snoop — Triet maintains momentum. At the film's core is a dissection not of a death but*

of the disintegration of a marriage, and of the unforgivable things we can say to each other when we are the most damaged. Surprisingly gripping for a film devoid of real action, this family drama masquerading as a murder-mystery touches on universal marital tensions; it is both enigmatic and very human. **Laura Venning, Empire**

### Cast

Sandra Hüller	Sandra Voyter
Swann Arlaud	Maitre Vincent Renzi
Milo Michado Graner	Daniel
Antoine Reinartz	Avocat général
Samuel Theis	Samuel Maleski

### Credits

Director	Justine Triet
Writers	Justine Triet, Arthur Harari
Producers	Marie-Ange Luciani, David Thion
Cinematography	Simon Beaufigli
Editing	Laurent Sénéchal
Country	France
Running time	150 minutes

### Film Facts

Justine Triet is only the third female director to win the prestigious Palme d'Or at Cannes Film Festival for *Anatomy of a Fall* (following Jane Campion for *The Piano* and Julie Ducournau for *Titane*). She was also nominated for the Queer Palm, and in fact Messi the dog, playing Snoop, won the Palm Dog!

Writer-director Triet and her co-writer (and partner) Arthur Harari initially looked at adapting a true story. *"But the ones we found were too predictable. There weren't many cases out there where we couldn't guess the ending and where I could find a complex relationship to explore. I've also always been captivated by cases involving foreigners who are being trialed outside of their native country, so I wanted to have that element in the film, and also tackle themes that I'm passionate about and that I've dealt with before, like the dynamics of a relationship."*

Of the role that Daniel (Sandra and Samuel's son) plays in the film, Triet says: *"I realised that I had filmed many children without ever giving them a proper role. In Anatomy of a Fall I wanted to capture an important moment in the life of a child at an age where he becomes more autonomous, and see the absolute trust he has in his mother transform slowly into a state of doubt."*

Of her interest in making a courtroom drama, Triet says: *"There is something I find wonderful and at the same time totally distressing about the space of the court and justice, and that is the idea that our lives are being told for us and that the chaos of people's lives is being reorganised to tell it. And they don't tell the truth: it's fiction, a narrative, like a magnifying mirror, a magnifying glass that looks at the smallest details of our lives, giving meaning to the most insignificant. It's this whole aspect of dissecting the smallest piece of people's existence to explain a criminal act or other that I find fascinating. And it is often also the place that reflects society, its deepest thinking, the way we can see men and women, the way we can reduce them to an image. In this case, Sandra, my main character, is quite badly treated by the public prosecutor in relation to her life and the way she lives her life."*

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