



## Complicit: The Films of Michael Haneke

# Amour

### Amour

A film by: Michael Haneke

©: Les Films du Losange, X Filme Creative Pool, Wega Film, France 3 Cinéma, ARD Degeto, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Westdeutscher Rundfunk  
Production Companies: Les Films du Losange, X Filme Creative Pool, Wega-Film

In co-production with: France 3 Cinéma, ARD, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Westdeutscher Rundfunk  
With the participation of: France Télévisions, Canal+, Ciné+, ORF Film/Fernseh-Abkommen, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Le Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée  
With the support of: Région Ile de France, FFA – Filmförderungsanstalt, MBB – Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, CNC/FFA Minitraite, Österreichisches Filminstitut, Filmfonds Wien, Eurimages Conseil de l'Europe

Presented by: Les Films du Losange (Paris), X Filme Creative Pool, Wega-Film

Executive Producers: Margaret Ménégoz, Uwe Schott, Michael Katz

Produced by: Margaret Ménégoz, Stefan Arndt, Veit Heiduschka, Michael Katz

Line Producers: Oliver Thaon, Ulli Neumann, Ulrike Lässer

Post-production Supervisors: Olivier Masclet, Stephan Von Larcher, Ulrike Lässer

1st Assistant Director: Alain Olivieri

Script Supervisor: Isabelle Perrin-Thévenet

Casting Director: Kris Portier de Bellaire

Written by: Michael Haneke

Director of Photography: Darius Khondji

Camera Operator: Jörg Widmer

Gaffer: Thierry Baucheron

Editors: Monika Willi, Nadine Muse

Additional Editors: Julia Drack, Yannick Coutheron

Artistic Adviser: Kathrin Resetarits

Art Director: Jean-Vincent Puzos

Construction Manager: Jérôme Krowicki

Key Make-up: Catherine Leterrier, Thi Loan Nguyen

Key Hair Stylist: Frédéric Souquet

Titles: Kornelius Tarmann, Judith Rataitz

Piano Music Performed by: Alexandre Tharaud

Piano Music Recording/Editing/Musical Direction: Cecile Lenoir

Sound: Guillaume Sciama, Jean-Pierre Laforce

Sound Effects: Pascal Chauvin

Cast:

Jean-Louis Trintignant (*Georges*)

Emmanuele Riva (*Anne*)

Isabelle Huppert (*Eva*)

Alexandre Tharaud (*Alexandre*)

William Shimell (*Geoff*)

Ramon Agirre (*concierge's husband*)

Rita Blanco (*concierge*)

Carole Franck (*nurse 1*)

Dinara Droukarova (*nurse 2*)

Laurent Capelluto (*police officer 1*)

Jean-Michel Monroc (*police officer 2*)

Suzanne Schmidt (*neighbour*)

Damien Jouillerot (*paramedic 1*)

Walide Afkir (*paramedic 2*)

France-Germany-Austria 2012©

127 mins

Digital 4K

### Michael Haneke on 'Amour'

*When we spoke about The White Ribbon in 2009, you were writing a film about old age, but you later put it aside because of another film on the subject. So is Amour different from what you had in mind then?*

Not really. To be honest, I had writer's block, and when [producer] Margaret Ménégoz told me one of her colleagues had seen a film on the same topic at a festival, I took that as an excuse to start work on something else. But as soon as I did that, the solution to my problem with the first script came to me! Also, it turned out that the film Margaret had told me about was very different from mine. There are many films about illness and dying, especially on TV, but most deal with the social aspects – the family, the hospital – and the physical suffering. Whereas to me what was interesting was how we cope with the suffering of someone we love very deeply. I could've made a film about a couple in their forties with a child who dies of cancer. It would be the same theme, but that would be more of a special case; fortunately, it doesn't happen to everyone. Whereas old age and the illnesses that accompany it touch nearly everybody in one way or another. At some point even people who've always been fit and well get worn out and die; sadly, that's inevitable.

*Did you do much research into the medical aspects of the story?*

Not a lot. I did some research before writing the script to make sure I wouldn't make mistakes, and I came across things I didn't know. I spoke with doctors, visited hospitals and attended therapy sessions, The scene where Georges sings to Anne, for instance, comes from a speech therapy session I witnessed; I found that very touching.

*You always wanted Jean Louis Trintignant to play Georges. He doesn't act much now, what if he'd said no?*

I probably wouldn't have made the film. I don't know any other actor who radiates that warmth he has, and the film needed that.

*You originally had Annie Girardot in mind to play Anne.*

Had Annie still been alive and able to play the part, I might have cast her, but with hindsight I'm far from sure she'd have been better. In fact, I think Emmanuelle [Riva] was perhaps better for the role. It's not that she's a better actress; she and Jean-Louis are just so believable as a couple. It really feels like they've spent so much time together and shared a lot.

*Did you give the actors much direction?*

No. I don't really like discussing the film too much with actors, nor do I do a lot of rehearsals. Before shooting starts, we'll go out for a meal and discuss all sorts of things, but I don't like talking very specifically about the film or the roles. Generally I've found that most good actors don't much like that either. I just give very simple instructions – sit down, pick up a glass, look at your watch, or whatever – and it's rare that an actor asks about the character's motivation for looking at their watch. You just need to make sure you get the casting right. That's not only about finding good actors, but about finding the right actor for the part; put a good actor in the wrong part and the result can be disastrous.

*Why did you make Georges and Anne former music teachers?*

## Complicit: The Films of Michael Haneke

**Three Paths to the Lake** Drei Wege zum See

Sun 1 Jun 12:45; Fri 6 Jun 20:45

**Lemmings, Part 1 – Arcadia**

Lemminge, Teil 1 – Arkadien

Sun 1 Jun 15:20; Sat 7 Jun 14:50

**Lemmings, Part 2 – Injuries**

Lemminge, Teil 2 – Verletzungen

Sun 1 Jun 18:20; Sat 7 Jun 17:50

**Meet Anne and Georges:**

**An Introduction to the Worlds of Michael Haneke**

Mon 2 Jun 18:10

**The White Ribbon** Das weiße Band

Mon 2 Jun 20:15 (+ intro by season curator Jelena

Milosavljevic); Mon 23 Jun 20:15; Sat 28 Jun 17:45

**Amour**

Tue 3 Jun 20:30; Sat 21 Jun 15:00;

Wed 25 Jun 20:30; Sun 29 Jun 18:00

**The Seventh Continent** Der siebente Kontinent

Wed 4 Jun 20:40; Mon 9 Jun 18:05

**25&Under: An Introduction to Michael Haneke**

Thu 5 Jun 18:20 Blue Room

**Funny Games**

Thu 5 Jun 20:45; Sat 21 Jun 18:00;

Sun 29 Jun 15:10

**Benny's Video**

Sun 8 Jun 18:30; Sun 22 Jun 18:15

**The Rebellion** Die Rebellion

Tue 10 Jun 20:50; Mon 16 Jun 18:15 (+ intro by

Ruby McGuigan, season curator)

**71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance**

71 Fragmente einer Chronologie des Zufalls

Wed 11 Jun 18:10; Tue 17 Jun 20:45

**Code Unknown**

Code inconnu: Récit incomplet de divers voyages

Wed 11 Jun 20:35; Tue 24 Jun 20:40;

Sat 28 Jun 15:00

**The Castle** Das Schloß

Mon 16 Jun 20:40; Mon 23 Jun 18:00

**Time of the Wolf** Le temps du loup

Tue 17 Jun 18:10; Wed 25 Jun 18:10 (+ intro by

Geoff Andrew, Film Critic, Lecturer and

Programmer)

**Funny Games U.S.**

Fri 20 Jun 20:50; Thu 26 Jun 18:10

**Happy End**

Fri 27 Jun 20:45; Mon 30 Jun 18:15

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**SIGHT  
AND  
SOUND**

It's a world I know; my stepfather was a composer. And it allowed me to use music in an interesting way. Music represents the possibility, at least, of consolation. Before we finalised the film's title, one we were considering was *La Musique s'arrête* (*The Music Stops*). Whenever there's music in the film, it's interrupted.

*You often use music very expressively as content or commentary. But do you also use it to shape your films?*

I always say that film is closest to music, not literature or theatre. For me, if a film hasn't the feeling of music, it's not successful. A film lives by its rhythms; like music, it's a bit like an arrow passing through time. It begins its journey at a particular moment and ends at another, and between those two points is a route which has to be carefully directed. That structure is rhythmic; if we don't find the right rhythm to tell a story, it could be the best story in the world, but it won't work.

The difficulty is that this is something difficult to teach or learn. In music, if someone hasn't a musical ear, when they hear an 'off' note they won't notice. You can't reproach anyone for that; either one has an 'ear' or one doesn't. It's the same in film. You need to have an 'ear' in relation to the actors. My stepfather had an absolutely pitch-perfect ear, and if he heard a false note he'd wince in pain. It's the same for me if an actor's 'off'; I notice at once. So while we can learn how to correct an 'off' note, we first need to be able to hear it.

*In many ways this film feels like your most personal yet.*

It is, and it's also the most directly emotional. There are scenes in my earlier films which were very personal, of course; but a film about how the media portray violence obviously involves a more intellectual approach, so there's more distance for the viewer. That said, even here, to arouse pity in the viewer would be deadly for the film, so I knew from the outset that sentimentality should be avoided. But yes, there's a lot of me in it; many things come from my own life.

*When we spoke about The White Ribbon you said you find shooting stressful. Was Amour any easier? You had just a few superb actors, and it was shot in the studio.*

It's always difficult to do something well, and easier to do something mediocre. Naturally, to do a film like this is easier than making one with 30 people on 100 locations, where you're dependent on time, weather etc. But this time there were other considerations, like the health of the actors. Also, with a film like this you have to be more meticulous with the details; it's like looking at a mirror with a magnifying glass, you can see the tiniest distortion. With lots of characters in different locations, you can juggle different stories, whereas with two people in one setting, it's hard to stop it becoming boring. So to write a film limited to the three unities is more difficult than writing a multi-strand film. But it's not as if I ask myself beforehand whether it's going to be harder; I simply want to tell a story and find a way to tell it. But it's much nicer shooting in a studio rather than having to wait for the sun in natural settings and so on. If it were up to me, I'd only ever shoot in the studio, as you've far more control. In that, I entirely agree with Hitchcock. I work in a similar way to him: I like everything meticulously planned. I'm not at all a fan of improvisation. But that has nothing to do with the quality of a finished film. After all, people have different ways of working, and others feel too enclosed in a studio. I personally try to rule out chance as much as possible when I make a film, but of course one can only go so far – especially if there are, as here, a couple of scenes involving a pigeon!

Michael Haneke interviewed by Geoff Andrew, *Sight and Sound*, December 2012