



The Main Feature

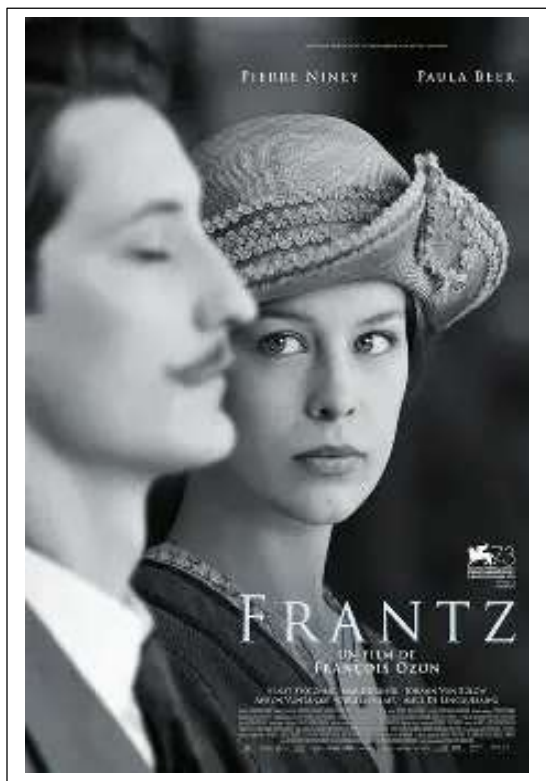
Season 45 – Issue 5 – Screening 13th November 2025

Frantz

France, Germany 2016
114 minutes Cert 12

Director François Ozon
Screenplay François Ozon, Philippe
Piazzo (from the novel
and play by Maurice
Rostand)
Cinematography Pascal Marti
Art Direction Suzanne Abel and
Dominique Moisan
Music Philippe Rombi

Adrien Rivoire	Pierre Niney
Anna	Paula Beer
Hans Hoffmeister	Ernst Stötzner
Magda Hoffmeister	Marie Gruber
Kreutz	Johann von Bülow
Frantz Hoffmeister	Anton von Lucke
Adrien's mother	Cyrielle Clair
Fanny	Alice de Lencquesaing



War has been an inherent part of human history for centuries. The horrors and pain it brings often stay imprinted into the memories of those who lived it and witnessed it for the rest of their lives. The bloodshed, the sadness, and the desperation are all themes filmmakers have been fascinated with since cinema became part of our lives.

Tonight's film, shown two days after Armistice Day, is a reminder that war on any scale inevitably interacts with the intensely personal and familial. An army is composed of soldiers who have parents, siblings, partners, children. Those left behind mourn their losses, and – in the heat of battle – the circumstances of a death on the front can be clouded.

Surviving soldiers can be casualties too. A recent study shows a substantial minority of veterans have common mental disorders (depression, anxiety, alcohol problems); and a few have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In *Frantz*, directed by François Ozon, the story is set in the aftermath of World War One, where a young German woman Anna (Paula Beer) is grieving the death of her fiancé, Frantz Hoffmeister, killed whilst fighting in France. Her parents are keen to marry her off to another German suitor. But she notices and subsequently meets a mysterious Frenchman Adrien (Pierre Niney) who visits Frantz's grave to lay flowers. She learns about Adrien's links to Frantz, and introduces him to Frantz's parents, revealing the tensions which exist between the French and Germans after a war which killed so many of their respective young men ('Every French man is my son's murderer,' snarls Frantz's father). The film touches on the guilt some feel about surviving the war; and the guilt about what they did in the heat of combat.

The story is based on a 1925 novel, and subsequently a 1930 play, by Maurice Rostand (the son of Edmond Rostand who wrote *Cyrano de Bergerac*) which was filmed by Ernst Lubitsch in 1932 as "*Broken Lullaby*" starring Lionel Barrymore, Nancy Carroll and Phillips Holmes. The original centred on the young Frenchman who visits the German's soldier's grave, but Ozon instead focuses on the German's fiancée, who strikes up a quasi-romantic relationship with the mysterious stranger after he enters her life. The Guardian commented 'Ozon is often at his best when working with women, and he has a fabulous talent in Paula Beer to bring his protagonist, Anna, to vivid life. She's stunning in the role.' Beer's performance saw her nominated for the César award for most promising actress, the Lumière award for best female revelation and the European Film Award for best actress; she won the Marcello Mastroianni award for best young performer at the 2016 Venice film festival.

Ozon's film, *Eight Women*, one of the first to gain him widespread recognition, was shown by the club in 2004 (with the notes, co-incidentally, also written by me). At that stage, Ozon was regarded as the enfant terrible of French cinema. His output has been impressive, leading him to be described once as the Woody Allen of France. It includes: *Swimming Pool* (2003) a Hitchcock/Chabrol style thriller with Charlotte Rampling; *Potiche* (2010 - roughly translated as *Trophy Wife*) in which Catherine Deneuve takes over her husband's umbrella factory; *In the House* (2012) about a teacher (Fabrice Luchini) inappropriately bonding with Claude, one of his students; and *Young and Beautiful* (2013) a steamy coming-of-age drama. More recently he has made *Summer of 85* (2020) a teenage love triangle; *Everything Went Fine* (2021) about assisted dying; *The Crime is Mine* (2023) a comedy touching on the Me-Too movement; *When Fall is Coming* (2024) which has curious resonances with the recent Australian trial concerning mushroom poisoning; and most recently *The Stranger* (2025) an adaptation of Albert Camus' celebrated novel.

Rather than enfant terrible, Ozon is now something of a French cinematic national treasure.

Michael Hipkins



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Club website: www.wncc.org.uk. Prefer to leave your comments on the film and your score online rather than on paper? Email to reactions@wncc.org.uk by Wednesday 19th November
Discs of most of our previous shows are available to hire for a modest fee.

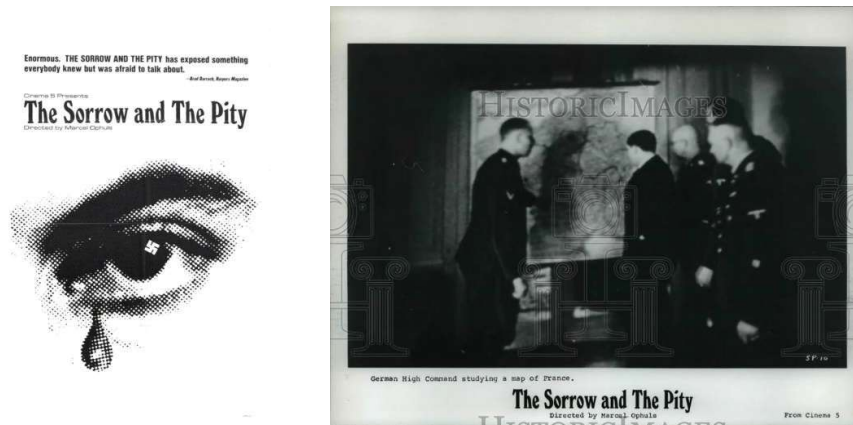
Marcel Ophüls

Tonight's film is about events during and after the First World War. The death was announced earlier this year of Marcel Ophüls, aged 97, whose most celebrated film was a documentary about France during the Second World War, *The Sorrow and the Pity* (*Le Chagrin et la Pitié*).

Marcel Ophüls was born Hans Marcel Oppenheimer on 1 November 1927 in Frankfurt. His father, Max Ophüls (Maximilian Oppenheimer), was a celebrated film maker who left Germany in 1933 for France after the Reichstag fire. He became a French citizen in 1938, then moved to the United States after the defeat of France in 1940. Marcel accompanied him.

Marcel's first steps in the cinema were as an assistant. Keen to follow his father as a director of fiction films, his first few works were not a great success and in 1966 he found himself thrown back onto working in television making documentaries and features for the ORTF, at the time the state-supported French television station. In 1967 he made two documentaries about the Munich crisis, combining newsreels, movie clips and interviews, a technique he continued throughout his subsequent work. He left the ORTF after the 'events' of May 1968.

In 1969, he made *The Sorrow and the Pity* which examines the responses of the French people to German occupation and their reasons for tending toward resistance or collaboration, focusing on the Auvergne region and the city of Clermont-Ferrand. Events are presented in roughly chronological order, with interviewees appearing throughout the film. Maurice Chevalier's 'Sweepin' the Clouds Away' is used repeatedly during the film. Chevalier was a popular entertainer with the German occupation force and was accused of collaboration even while he claimed to have offered support to the resistance, mirroring the complexities of French reactions to occupation highlighted in the film.



The film uses interviews with a German officer, collaborators, and resistance fighters from Clermont-Ferrand. They comment on the nature of and reasons for collaboration, including antisemitism, Anglophobia, fear of Bolsheviks and Soviet invasion, and the desire for power. The candid approach of the film shone a spotlight on antisemitism in France and disputed the idealised collective memory of the nation at large - the film reminded its audience that not all of France was in the Resistance.

After its release, communists, socialists, and 'independent groups' treated the film favourably; however, the far right disapproved on account of the director's background. Some French critics denounced the film as unpatriotic. The film has also been criticised for being too selective and that the director was 'too close to the events portrayed to provide an objective study of the period.'

Marcel Ophüls went on to make other documentaries about: atrocities in wartime; Klaus Barbie (for which he won an Oscar); and a history of journalism in times of war.

Michael Hipkins

Comments and reactions to: **The Dressmaker** (shown on 23rd October 2025)

No of reaction slips received = 26

Average score = 7.73

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	~	~	2	1	4	15	3	1

Position	Film	Score	Reactions
1	Conclave	8.15	34
2	The Dressmaker	7.73	26
3	Perfect Days	7.34	29
4	Maria	6.16	25

Excellent all-round entertainment

A mishmash of a film, but was entertaining

A good film for a laugh and enjoyable. Kate Winslet very good as was Judy Davis

Bittersweet! Enjoyed the nod to spaghetti westerns

Enjoyable and different. Another good Kate Winslet performance

Some good jokes and a fascinating portrait of small-town Australia. Not sure about the ending though

Good to see women's vengeance at work!

Loved it from beginning to end - a great film

Great performances by Hugo Weaving, Sarah Snook and of course Kate Winslet

Enjoyable – interesting twist

Loved the choreography

I loved it. All emotions felt. Would definitely watch again

A strange confection – undefinable but still enjoyable

Very funny, well-acted, with a great revenge ending

All characters well developed. Each a gem and must have been a joy for the actors to have portrayed them. Costume, set and dialogue – all excellent

Campy, over the top, wonderful, ridiculous, beautiful

Forthcoming attraction: 27th November – **Jimi: All is by My Side**



It might prove frustrating for filmgoers who'd prefer a more traditional narrative. Instead, [it] shines a light on a formative time in his all-too short career, and on the women who nurtured, shaped and loved him – Roger Ebert.com

A short-sighted and somewhat offensive portrayal of Jimi and those around him at the time. Final verdict: Fictional Movie – 2/10
Biopic purporting to be based in fact – 1/10
(for spelling all the names right) – Kathy Etchingham (review on IMDb.com)

Andre Benjamin gives a magnetic performance as Jimi Hendrix – New Musical Express

A surprisingly thoughtful meditation on the key year that transformed guitarist Jimi Hendrix from session player to superstar – Radio Times