

# Annette (film)

***Annette*** is a 2021 musical romantic drama film directed by Leos Carax in his English-language directorial debut. The film's story and music were written by Ron Mael, Russell Mael, and Carax, with lyrics co-written by Carax. The film, which has been described as a rock opera, follows a stand-up comedian (Adam Driver) and his opera singer wife (Marion Cotillard), and how their lives are changed when they have their first child. Simon Helberg and Devyn McDowell also appear.

An international co-production between France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, the United States, Mexico and Japan, *Annette* was premiered on 6 July 2021 as the opening film at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival,<sup>[8]</sup> where Carax received the Best Director award. It was released in France the next day by UGC Distribution and in the United States on 20 August by Amazon Studios. The film received positive reviews from critics.

## Plot

After a swift courtship, provocative stand-up comedian Henry McHenry publicly declares his engagement to world-famous soprano Ann Desfranoux. Shortly afterward, Ann gives birth to their daughter Annette, portrayed by a wooden marionette puppet. The marriage becomes rocky when Henry begins to take care of Annette while Ann's career flourishes and takes her overseas.

Later, Ann has dreams about six women who come forward with allegations of past abuse at the hands of Henry and nightmares about Henry almost killing her. Back home, Henry's career begins to spiral, exacerbated by an onstage meltdown, and he comes to resent Ann's continued success. The two schedule a private cruise with the goal of mending their relationship. However, the cruise ends in disaster when Ann falls overboard during a stormy night after Henry drunkenly forces her to waltz with him. After realizing that his wife is dead, Henry and Annette get to an island using a lifeboat. There, both fall asleep, when Ann's ghost suddenly appears and gives her voice to infant Annette as a form of revenge, so she can haunt Henry.

### Annette



Theatrical release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>Leos Carax</u>
<b>Story by</b>	<u>Leos Carax</u> <u>Ron Mael</u> <u>Russell Mael</u>
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Charles Gillibert</u> <u>Paul-Dominique Win Vacharasinthu</u> <u>Adam Driver</u>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Adam Driver</u> <u>Marion Cotillard</u> <u>Simon Helberg</u> <u>Devyn McDowell</u> <u>Angèle</u>
<b>Cinematography</b>	<u>Caroline Champetier</u>
<b>Edited by</b>	<u>Nelly Quettier</u>
<b>Music by</b>	<u>Sparks</u> <b>Lyrics:</b> <u>Ron Mael</u> <u>Russell Mael</u>

Though cleared of legal suspicion for Ann's death, Henry finds himself at a financial dead-end without her income. He contacts Ann's former accompanist, revealing Annette's singing voice and suggesting they use her gift for a musical act. The accompanist reluctantly agrees, having been in love with Ann, and as they tour, Baby Annette becomes a worldwide hit. Henry continues to drink heavily and stay out late, haunted by memories of Ann. One night, when returning home, Henry overhears Annette singing a rendition of "We Love Each Other So Much", which was Ann and Henry's song. He confronts the accompanist, who implies that he is Annette's real father. In retaliation, Henry drowns him in the backyard pool, witnessed by Annette from her bedroom window. Henry plans one final performance at the "Hyperbowl" halftime show, but Annette refuses to sing, instead declaring, "Daddy kills people," to the packed stadium. Henry is tried and convicted.

A few years later, Annette visits her father in prison. Annette, suddenly portrayed by a living human girl, denies his attempts at reconciliation and even blames her mother for using her to get revenge. She tells him that he now has "nothing to love". After the living Annette leaves, the Annette puppet lies lifeless on the floor.

## Cast

- Adam Driver as Henry McHenry
- Marion Cotillard as Ann Defrasnoux
  - Catherine Trottman as Ann's singing soprano voice
- Simon Helberg as The Accompanist
- Devyn McDowell as Annette
  - Hebe Griffiths as the singing voice of Annette's puppet form.
- Angèle, Kiko Mizuhara, Julia Bullock, Claron McFadden, Noémie Schellens and Natalie Mendoza as the Six Accuser Chorus
- Natalia Lafourcade as LAPD Police Officer
- Kanji Furutachi as Doctor
- Rila Fukushima, Eva Van Der Gucht and Laura Jansen as Nurses
- Rebecca Sjöwall as Connie O'Connor
- Nino Porzio as Sheriff Garoni
- Davide Jakubowski as Sheriff Humprey
- Wim Opbrouck as Baby Annette announcer
- Colin Lainchbury-Brown as Hyperbowl announcer

	Leos Carax
<b>Production companies</b>	CG Cinema International Tribus P Films International <u>Arte France Cinéma</u> Theo Films <u>UGC</u> Detailfilm Scope Pictures Wrong Men <u>RTBF (Télévision Belge)</u> Eurosace <sup>[1]</sup> <u>Piano</u> Garidi Films
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>UGC Distribution</u> (France) September Film (Belgium) <sup>[2][3]</sup> Alamode Film (Germany) Filmcoopi Zürich (Switzerland) <u>Amazon Studios</u> (United States) <u>MUBI</u> (Mexico) Eurosace (Japan) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Release dates</b>	6 July 2021 ( <u>Cannes</u> ) 7 July 2021 (France) <sup>[4]</sup> 20 August 2021 (United States) 26 November 2021 (Mexico) 16 December 2021 (Germany)
<b>Running time</b>	140 minutes

- Geoffrey Carey as *Ape of God* announcer
- Yasin Islek as Dubai Singer Faruq
- Russell Mael as Russell Mael/Jet pilot
- Ron Mael as Ron Mael/Jet pilot
- Leos Carax as Leos Carax
- Nastya Carax as Nastya
- Rebecca Dyson-Smith and Graciela María as Photographers

<b>Countries</b>	France
	Germany
	Belgium
	United States
	Japan
	Mexico
	Switzerland <sup>[5]</sup>
<b>Language</b>	English <sup>[5]</sup>
<b>Budget</b>	\$15.5 million <sup>[6]</sup>
<b>Box office</b>	\$3.1 million <sup>[7]</sup>

## Production

It was announced in November 2016 that Carax was set to make his first English language film, with Adam Driver, Rooney Mara and Rihanna in talks to star in the film. Filming was scheduled to begin in spring 2017.<sup>[6]</sup> In March 2017, Amazon Studios acquired the film, but Mara and Rihanna were not involved in the project.<sup>[9]</sup> In May, Michelle Williams was cast to replace Mara, with filming then due to begin in July.<sup>[10]</sup> Production on the film stalled, with the screenwriters Ron and Russell Mael attributing the delay to Driver's commitments to *Star Wars*. Filming was moved to begin in summer 2019.<sup>[11]</sup>

Development resumed on the project in May 2019, with Marion Cotillard now cast to replace Williams.<sup>[12][13]</sup> In October 2019, Simon Helberg joined the cast.<sup>[14]</sup>

Filming began in August 2019, with shooting taking place in Los Angeles, Brussels and Bruges<sup>[15]</sup> and at locations in Germany including Münster, Cologne and Bonn.<sup>[16]</sup> Production concluded in November 2019.<sup>[17]</sup> In January 2020, it was announced that the Belgian singer Angèle was cast in an undisclosed role.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Music

The first song from the score and soundtrack, "So May We Start", was released as a single on 28 May 2021.<sup>[19]</sup>

The film's stars, while not trained, do most of their own singing.<sup>[20]</sup> Cotillard has sung in previous film roles and has had a musical career outside film, and Driver has sung in previous film roles as well.<sup>[21][22]</sup>

A second single, "We Love Each Other So Much", was released via streaming on 25 June 2021. The soundtrack *Annette (Cannes Edition - Selections from the Motion Picture Soundtrack)* was released on CD and vinyl on MasterWorks / Milan label by Sony Music; it contains 15 tracks.<sup>[23]</sup> The *Unlimited Edition: The Original Movie Soundtrack* was released digitally and as a double CD shortly after and contains virtually all of the music from the movie as well as demos.<sup>[24]</sup>

## Release

*Annette* debuted at the Cannes Film Festival on 6 July 2021.<sup>[25]</sup> and was released in France the same day by UGC Distribution.<sup>[26]</sup>

The film was given a limited North American theatrical release on 6 August 2021 before digital streaming on Amazon Prime Video on 20 August 2021.<sup>[27]</sup>

In June 2021, the film's UK and Ireland distribution rights were acquired by the streaming service MUBI.<sup>[28]</sup> It was also selected in the 'Gala Presentation' section of 26th Busan International Film Festival.<sup>[29]</sup>

## Reception

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The review aggregator website *Rotten Tomatoes* reports an approval rating of 71% based on 262 reviews, and an average rating of 6.7/10. The website's critics consensus reads, "A dreamy, delicate dance between farce and fantasia, *Annette* is a magnificently ludicrous rock opera whose experimental approach to its emotional extremes is an ambitious, if not peculiar, return for director Leos Carax."<sup>[30]</sup> On *Metacritic*, the film has a weighted average score of 67 out of 100, based on 51 critics, indicating "generally favorable reviews".<sup>[31]</sup> *Annette* was a NYT Critics' Pick; reviewer A. O. Scott described it as a "highly cerebral,

formally complex film about unbridled emotion" that "masters its own paradoxes. [...] A work of art propelled by a skepticism about where art comes from and why we value it the way we do. A fantastical film that attacks some of our culture's most cherished fantasies. Utterly unreal and completely truthful."<sup>[32]</sup>

## Accolades

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Recipient(s)	Result	Ref.
<u>Cannes Film Festival</u>	<u>17 July 2021</u>	<u>Best Director</u>	<u>Leos Carax</u>	Won	[33]
		<u>Palme d'Or</u>	<i>Annette</i>	Nominated	[34]
<u>Florida Film Critics Circle</u>	<u>21 December 2021</u>	<u>Best Picture</u>	<i>Annette</i>	Runner-up	[35] [36]
		<u>Best Director</u>	Leos Carax	Runner-up	
		<u>Best Actor</u>	<u>Adam Driver</u>	Won	
		<u>Best Original Screenplay</u>	<u>Leos Carax, Ron Mael and Russell Mael</u>	Runner-up	
		<u>Best Art Direction/Production Design</u>	<i>Annette</i>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Visual Effects</u>	<i>Annette</i>	Runner-up	
		<u>Best Score</u>	Ron Mael and Russell Mael	Nominated	
<u>Golden Globe Awards</u>	<u>January 9, 2022</u>	<u>Best Actress in a Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical</u>	<u>Marion Cotillard</u>	Nominated	[37]
<u>Lumières Award</u>	<u>January 17, 2022</u>	<u>Best Film</u>	Charles Gillibert, Paul-Dominique Win Vacharasinthu, Adam Driver, and Leos Carax	Nominated	[38]
		<u>Best Director</u>	Leos Carax	Won	
		<u>Best Cinematography</u>	<u>Caroline Champetier</u>	Won	
		<u>Best Music</u>	Ron Mael and Russell Mael	Won	
<u>César Awards</u>	<u>February 25, 2022</u>	<u>Best Film</u>	Charles Gillibert, Paul-Dominique Win Vacharasinthu, and Leos Carax	Nominated	[39]
		<u>Best Director</u>	Leos Carax	Won	
		<u>Best Actor</u>	Adam Driver	Nominated	
		<u>Best Original Screenplay</u>	Leos Carax, Ron Mael, and Russell Mael	Nominated	
		<u>Best Cinematography</u>	Caroline Champetier	Nominated	
		<u>Best Editing</u>	Nelly Quettier	Won	
		<u>Best Sound</u>	Erwan Kerzanet, Katia Boutin, Maxence Dussère, Paul Heymans, and Thomas Gauder	Won	
		<u>Best Original Music</u>	Ron Mael and Russell Mael	Won	
		<u>Best Costume Design</u>	Pascaline Chavanne	Nominated	
		<u>Best Production Design</u>	Florian Sanson	Nominated	

		Best Visual Effects	Guillaume Pondard	Won	
Gaúdi Awards	March 6, 2022	Best European Film	<i>Annette</i>	Nominated	[40]

"So May We Start" was shortlisted for the Academy Award for Best Original Song,<sup>[41]</sup> but not nominated.

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