

A production **EVERYBODY ON DECK**



# **POLINA**

**(Polina, danser sa vie)**

A film by Valérie Müller and Angelin Preljocaj

With

Anastasia Shevtsova,

Niels Schneider, Juliette Binoche, Jérémie Bélingard, Aleksei Guskov

Running time: 112'

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# **SYNOPSIS**

Trained from an early age by rigorous, perfectionist Professor Bojinski, Polina is a promising classic dancer. She is just about to join the prestigious Bolchoï Ballet when she discovers contemporary dance. That throws everything into question on a profound level.

Polina leaves it all behind and moves to France to work with famous choreographer Liria Elsaj. Despite her determination and hard work to the point of obsession, Polina just can't seem to break through. So she moves to Anvers in search of work - and a new life.

# Interview with Valérie Müller & Angelin Preljocaj

**What was it exactly that touched you in Bastien Vivès' graphic novel, to the point of wanting to make it into a movie?**

Angelin Preljocaj: What interested me was the path she took. How the fragilities and weaknesses of a person can eventually be a springboard for creativity and success. From the time I began to dance, I have seen tons of dancers. Some very talented, others less. And it turns out that it's not always the most talented who have careers. Some are astounding and then suddenly burn out - that happens to both dancers and choreographers. It's a kind of longevity, obstinacy and endurance that gives certain artists their power. When the graphic novel came out, I found it very realistic in that respect.

Valérie Müller: Beyond the magnificent graphic art, what I thought was fabulous was the way she completely avoided the clichés you usually see in stories about classical dancers, where they are always anorexic victims of rivalry and competition. For once, we are in a world of young people who are working and struggling with moral and physical difficulties. We see them living and partying. It's very real.

**Valérie, you wrote the adaptation, which is very faithful in certain "frames" but differs when it comes to the narration.**

VM: It's true that in the comic book, certain things were brought up but weren't really anchored down. There were Russian names, for example, but we were never really sure if we were in Russia! I wanted to flesh it out and give it more realism, especially by developing Polina's parents and their social class. That modest upbringing was a reference to several personalities in the dance world. Angelin came from that, as well as Pina Bausch and Noureev... We wanted to insist on the idea that when you have nothing, you still have a body, and the only thing the expression of a body requires is work!

**You also changed the path Polina takes. Instead of becoming a prima ballerina, she becomes an up-and-coming choreographer.**

AP: That was almost a feminist stance! The fact that the choreographer she meets is a woman is no accident either. We have a lot of prima ballerinas, but there are very few women choreographers. It's like the film business, which doesn't have enough female filmmakers. It was important to us that Polina's path be the path of a person who is master of her own life and makes it happen - that she takes her place in the world of art.

**The choreographer played by Juliette Binoche says in the film, "all my work expresses the absent and the missing." Is that you speaking through her character, Angelin ?**

AP: Ah, for that... ask the Missus!

VM: It's true that when I wrote that character, I drew a lot of inspiration from Angelin. He has written many duets which ask that question of impossible fusion, searching for "the other."

AP: That comes from Plato's *Symposium*. He says love exists because we have been divided in two and are searching for the missing half. The quest for love is thus the drive to find the missing part. It's true that I have often used that idea in the choreography of certain duets. Juliette spent weeks watching me work to build her character.

**Juliette Binoche was a dancer who worked with Akram Khan. Was she an obvious choice for the role of Liria ?**

VM: Yes, because in addition to her immense talent as an actress, she had that dancing experience, which gave her a strong relationship to the body. Playing a choreographer was probably fairly logical for her, like a sort of continuity.

AP: And a challenge, too! She worked on her dancing every day for six months, because we wanted everyone who we see dancing in the film to be dancing for real.

### **Were you certain that you needed a real dancer to play Polina?**

VM: To be honest, we began by searching for actresses who had trained as dancers. But we soon realized that if it had been a few years since they had stopped dancing, their level wouldn't be sufficient anymore.

AP: We auditioned almost 300 girls in Europe. We were constantly confronted by the problem of dancers who were perfect for ballet, but less so for contemporary dance - or they were excellent dancers all around but less comfortable when it came to acting. So we said to ourselves that we had to go look for her in Russia. We went to Moscow, and then Saint Petersburg. I think we saw 600 dancers, all in all.

### **And you found Anastasia Shevtsova!**

VM: In addition to her abilities as a dancer, she had a very powerful look on screen - that little something extra that hints of mystery. She learned French for the film. Angelin created the final duet with and for her. It was powerful experiencing that adventure with her.

AP: Polina is full of Anastasia's personality. She is reserved and yet very strong. We let her fully embrace the character, with her intense gaze and her unique way of seeing the world... In this film, a lot of the emotions are expressed through the body and the eyes. It's not a very talky film!

### **For the role of Adrien, it was the opposite path: an actor takes up dancing. Did you include Niels Schneider in your show *Retour à Berratham* (2015) to prepare him for his role as a dancer?**

AP: Exactly! I was working on *Retour à Berratham* and doing preproduction for the film at the same time. When we chose Niels to act in the film, I wanted to include him in the show so that he could live with the dance troupe for a few months. I wasn't sure he would be available, because the creative process requires four or five months of work, which is a lot longer than a film shoot. But he immediately understood our idea and made himself available to do both. What's more, his screen tests with Anastasia were fabulous. He was the one who destabilized her the most.

VM: I have to add that Niels is extremely intelligent and has colossal physical memory. We were blown away!

AP: Jérémie Bélingard came to mind after we had worked together at the Opera of Paris. He is brilliant and endearing. We had to do some screen tests, but he turned out to be very relaxed and natural. That young man has enormous potential and has a generous spirit.

### **Co-directing a film is relatively unusual. How did you divide up the work?**

AP: Valérie wrote the screenplay and I was assigned to the editing. For the shoot, we agreed to co-direct, with fairly well-defined fields of action. Actually, everything got a bit mixed up on the set.

VM: We'd decided to split up the roles so that I would take care of directing the actors and Angelin would be more on the scenic direction. But it all seemed to fall through... In the end, the fact that we trusted each other meant that we ended up agreeing on all the decisions we had to take.

### **Why did you choose to film in scope ?**

VM: Because of arms! Scope allows you to keep both fully outstretched arms within a shot! And for duets, you can have both bodies together in one wide shot.

AP: There is a dance in space that is more visibly evident in scope. It communicates what is going on between the bodies. In a more restricted space, you are focused on only one body. That was the advantage of scope: encompassing two bodies in the same space.

VM: Especially since the other big question was: would we film the dancing in detail or as a whole? We ended up emphasizing detail in the rehearsal work and filming the dances themselves in sequences of wider shots that breathed more, with more place for space.

**Filming dance is a particular kind of challenge. Angelin, are you comfortable with that?**

AP: Yes, but it's always heartbreaking in the edit when you're trying not to cut up the movement too much... I learned a lot when I did *L'Annonciation* (2003), as well as when I collaborated with Valérie and Olivier Assayas, who made *Eldorado* (2008).

**Did you have any dance films in mind when you were in preproduction?**

AP: Yes, of course. *The Red Shoes*, obviously. I am also a big fan of Fred Astaire movies, for the fluidity with which they transition from acting to dancing. They have entire sequences in one shot that fascinate me, and I wanted to recreate that kind of feeling. *All That Jazz* is also very important. Bob Fosse tells the story of how life interferes with dance and vice-versa - how the two contaminate one another. *Polina* had the subtitle "dance your life," which I think put it perfectly.

VM: I'd add *Billy Elliot*, which is very well done in terms of choreography and perfectly in tune with its little hero. And in a different genre, there is also *Pollock*, starring and directed by Ed Harris, where you see how things that happen in life influence the artist he becomes. Certain sequences of *Polina* also touch upon that idea.

**Angelin, you did your first solo performance quite late in your career (*Le Funambule*, 2009) and now here is your first fiction film. Does doing something for the first time really excite you anymore?**

AP: Yes, but it's always the first time with regards to dance. I dance my life. Even when I made an advertisement for Air France, I told myself that I was doing a service for dance. I agreed to do it because I had the possibility of filming a sequence of movement in one long shot, and I liked the elegance of the project. For me it was "a promo for dance!" Whatever I do, I aim to serve dance - really.

Interview by Charlotte Lipinska

# Interview with Anastasia Shevtsova

## **What was casting like for you?**

I was very nervous. It was at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, where I am dancing now. First I had to dance several short samples, then act in Russian and in French, which was pretty difficult for me because I didn't speak French at all! Then I was invited to Paris to do scenes with the other actors, and they hired me.

## **Were you familiar with the work of Angelin Preljocaj?**

Yes, of course. I studied one of his choreographies in school. He is quite famous in Russia, very much admired by many fans. That made me even more stunned to be chosen for his film!

## **How did he present the character of Polina to you?**

As a young lady who doesn't just follow the course of her life, who fights her destiny and everything that happens to her.

## **Do you see yourself in her?**

Yes, we have many things in common. Especially since shooting the film, because it made me want to turn more and more towards contemporary dance. And to become a choreographer, too! And now, I try to better understand the characters I personify when I dance. Before, I was only focused on technique and didn't think much about the acting work. The film opened me up to a lot of things.

## **How do you see Polina's relationship with Professor Bojinski?**

In Russia, we are in dance school for 9 or 10 years. So the relationship to our professors becomes very strong - they are almost our parents. In this story, there is a mix of fear, respect and obedience. But it's Bojinski who first gives Polina the desire to dance. He is the one who inspires her and gives her the energy she needs.

## **Polina seems free and happy when she dances for her in the street. But not performing on the stage.**

Because classical dance is not synonymous with freedom! It's very difficult, strict and limiting. Contemporary dance is more giving. They are two very different worlds.

## **How did Angelin and Valérie direct you?**

Each in their own way, very different from each other. Valérie talked to us more about the characters' emotions and personalities. Angelin was more involved in the action and dance scenes.

## **You were face-to-face with Juliette Binoche for the first few days of the shoot. How did that go?**

Juliette was very nice to me. She helped me so much and gave me advice. She knew I wasn't a professional actress, and I am so thankful to her for having constantly helped me and never getting discouraged. She was very generous. I admire her enormously.

## **You learned French for the film?**

Yes. At first I thought I could just learn the lines and repeat them, but when I showed up for the shoot I realized the directors wanted to push me out of my comfort zone, and I would have to speak a lot better than that! While we were shooting, they didn't hesitate to change things in the script. So I understood right away that I had to learn the language as quickly as possible!

**If you could keep just one memory of the shoot, what would it be?**

Hm... I think my favorite scene is the duet from Snow White. We shot that scene in Aix-en-Provence with Niels Schneider. He really surprised me, because he isn't a dancer, but he dances like a pro! That was an exceptional moment for me, because his acting talent made the emotions he brought to it so powerful.

**At the end of the film, Polina becomes a young choreographer. Did you imagine what the rest of her life would be?**

I think, I'm even pretty sure, that she will become a great choreographer, that she'll return to Russia and go back to see Bojinski to thank him. She will continue to develop as a dancer, choreographer and woman.

Interview by Charlotte Lipinska

# Interview with Juliette Binoche

**A few years back, you danced with Akram Khan. Did you "immerse" yourself in the life of dancers again to build your character and physically feel that unique day-to-day experience?**

My commitment to the show Akram and I created was radical, because for two years I dedicated myself entirely to rehearsals and the tour. On this film, I had the privilege of observing Angelin at work and trying to understand his emotional state - where his movement was coming from. A choreographer isn't necessarily a dancer, but if he is or has been, dancers are able to more easily enter into his world. But I did train with Nagisa Shirai, one of his favorite dancers, and Sergio, who has been his assistant for many years.

**Is there something in particular that you like about that hands-on approach?**

Dance allows you to get in touch with another part of yourself. Movement brings body and spirit together. I love the risks certain choreographers have taken throughout history, to break away from the conventional and find a movement of their own. Taking the risk of being yourself is courageous, because you can be swiftly rejected or misunderstood. The information the body receives through movement is precious; we are more or less conscious of it, but when our body is available, open, stretched out and alive, it becomes our creative paintbrush, our material for self-actualization. The experience I wanted to have with the performance I did with Akram, which was called "In-I," was to try to find emotion in the movement, and not just be locked into an achieving an external appearance.

**Did you spend a lot of time observing Angelin at work as a choreographer?**

I saw him rehearse and create. I saw all the documentaries about him. I tried to see what he saw.

**What were you able to take away from that - perhaps even "steal" - for your interpretation of Liria?**

There is a language between a choreographer and his dancers that is woven together through long hours of rehearsal. Dancers "catch" things you can't express through words. Angelin has his movement, but he also has breaks in his movements - he likes having fun. He aims for simplicity, with the natural weight of the body as an integral part of movement. When he creates, he lets his body go; but at the same time, he is in front of the mirror and looks at the effect and makes changes, because he works between what his body says and what he sees. There is a confidence in Angelin that I wanted to have, and a certain distance, because he knows he will have to be demanding. But Angelin is benevolent to his dancers, even if he doesn't mother them.

**We can clearly see Liria as Angelin's feminine "double." Did that put a certain weight of responsibility on you?**

I spent time with Angelin and his dance company, but in the end, it's hard to know what is intentional or not. My responsibility was to be sufficiently sure of myself in front of the camera, and above all, in front of his dancers.

**It's extraordinary to be directed by the person you are more or less playing on-screen. How did Valérie and Angelin direct you?**

Sometimes Angelin put me to the test; for the audition scene, he asked me to get up front and demonstrate the moves. I was surprised, but then again, that's how movies are - you have to go for it and be fearless. Valérie and Angelin are very much in sync - they were both attentive and committed to their first film together.

**Liria is an accomplished, famous choreographer. Like filmmakers, there are very few. Did the idea of portraying a powerful artist in a primarily masculine world make it more enjoyable to you?**

I honestly think that when you are an artist, you don't think about your gender. You are in another space-

time, in a reality that is thirsty for the truth within and through our experience and state of being. But in everyday life, to get financing, venues and various forms of support, being a woman requires fortitude, strength and faith. But I also have to say, there are more and more women filmmakers, and that difference is really going to fade in the next few years.

**Liria tells Polina that an artist is "someone who knows how to see the world around her." Do you share that view?**

Experience can make us more human if we learn to let go and accept that we are not as strong as we imagined, or as weak as we believed ourselves to be! Observation is a door that opens between ourselves and others. I think an artist builds her potential over time, which is unfair for dancers, since the time you can dance is more restricted, but I think another way of approaching the body and dance will emerge, a kind of dance that will do little or no damage to the articulations.

**After *Slack Bay*, here you were once again faced with a non-professional actress. Did you give her any extra help, or support her during the shoot?**

The shoot was a hybrid of dance moments and acting moments. We shared the challenges, and I think on both sides, there was togetherness, patience and benevolence. Anastasia had a lot of questions; she had to come to terms with Angelin's dancing as well as the craft of acting. Throughout the shoot, Anastasia had modesty, sensitivity and a wild desire to live.

Interview by Charlotte Lipinska

# IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA

## ANASTASIA SHEVTSOVA (Polina)

Born in 1995 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, Anastasia Shevtsova developed her love for the arts at an early age. She learned to play violin and piano, paint and sing. At the age of 10, she entered the Russian Academy of Ballet, and graduated nine years later. Anastasia has just joined the Mariinsky Theatre of Saint Petersburg, one of the world's most prestigious ballet companies, with a vast repertory, both classical and modern. Filmed during her last year of training, POLINA is Anastasia's first role on the big screen.

## NIELS SCHNEIDER (Adrien)

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 2016 | DALIDA by Lisa Azuelos                         |
| 2015 | POLINA by Valérie Müller and Angelin Preljocaj |
|      | LA BELLE DORMANT by Adolpho Arrietta           |
|      | DARK INCLUSION by Arthur Harari                |
| 2014 | GEMMA BOVARY by Anne Fontaine                  |
|      | QUANTUM LOVE by Lisa Azuelos                   |
| 2013 | CHAOS by Etienne Faure                         |
|      | THE ART DEALER by François Margolin            |
| 2012 | YOU AND THE NIGHT by Yann Gonzalez             |
|      | L'ÂGE ATOMIQUE by Helena Klotz                 |
| 2011 | THE HOWLING: REBORN by Joe Nimziki             |
| 2010 | HEARTBEATS by Xavier Dolan                     |
| 2009 | FATAL BAZOOKA by Michaël Youn                  |
| 2008 | I KILLED MY MOTHER by Xavier Dolan             |
|      | 2 FROGS IN THE WEST by Dany Papineau           |
| 2007 | EVERYTHING IS FINE by Yves Christian Fournier  |
|      | THE TASTE OF NOTHINGNESS by Pascal Robitaille  |

## JÉRÉMIE BÉLINGARD (Karl)

Jérémy Bélingard entered the Paris Opera Ballet School in 1987. In 1993, at the age of 18, he joined the Paris Opera Ballet company. He was awarded the title of Coryphée in 1994, Sujet in 1999 and Premier Danseur in 2001. In 1998, he won the Prix du Cercle Carpeaux, awarded once a year to an exceptional dancer of the Paris Opera Ballet company. On March 28, 2007, after his performance in *Don Quixote* (Rudolf Noureev), he was awarded the title of Etoile. In 2010, he was knighted with the medal for Arts and Letters by the French Minister of Culture.

In 2011, Bélingard choreographed *Bye Bye Vénus* with hip-hop dancers for the Suresnes Cités Dance Festival. He has been featured in numerous advertising campaigns for brands such as Hermès, Sony, Jean-Paul Gaultier and Givenchy.

For film, he created and performed the choreography of the animated film BALLERINA by Eric Summer and Eric Warin, and recently played a role in Laetitia Casta's short film IN ME, presented at the closing ceremony of the 2016 Cannes International Critics' Week.

## **JULIETTE BINOCHE (Liria Elsaj)**

- 2016 GHOST IN THE SHELL by Rupert Sanders  
TELLE MÈRE, TELLE FILLE by Noémie Saglio
- 2015 POLINA by Valérie Müller and Angelin Preljocaj  
SLACK BAY by Bruno Dumont
- 2014 THE WAIT by Piero Messina  
1,000 TIMES GOOD NIGHT by Erik Poppe  
WORDS AND PICTURES by Fred Schepisi  
GODZILLA by Gareth Edwards  
CLOUDS OF SILS MARIA by Olivier Assayas  
NOBODY WANTS THE NIGHT by Isabel Coixet  
THE 33 by Patricia Riggen
- 2013 CAMILLE CLAUDEL 1915 by Bruno Dumont
- 2012 ELLES by Malgorzata Szumowska  
SON OF NO ONE by Dito Montiel  
ANOTHER WOMAN'S LIFE by Sylvie Testud  
COSMOPOLIS by David Cronenberg  
AN OPEN HEART by Marion Laine
- 2010 CERTIFIED COPY by Abbas Kiarostami
- 2007 DISENGAGEMENT by Amos Gitai  
SUMMER HOURS by Olivier Assayas
- 2006 DAN IN REAL LIFE by Peter Hedges  
FLIGHT OF THE RED BALLOON by Hsiao-Hsien Hou  
PARIS by Cédric Klapisch  
PARIS, JE T'AIME by Nobuhiro Suwa
- 2005 MARY by Abel Ferrara  
BREAKING AND ENTERING by Anthony Minghella  
A FEW DAYS IN SEPTEMBER by Santiago Amigorena
- 2004 BEE SEASON by Scott Mc Gehee and David Siegel
- 2004 CACHÉ (HIDDEN) by Michael Haneke
- 2003 IN MY COUNTRY by John Boorman
- 2001 JET LAG by Danièle Thompson
- 2000 CHOCOLAT by Lasse Hallström
- 1999 THE WIDOW OF SAINT-PIERRE by Patrice Leconte  
CODE UNKNOWN by Michael Haneke
- 1998 THE CHILDREN OF THE CENTURY by Diane Kurys
- 1997 ALICE AND MARTIN by André Téchiné
- 1995 THE ENGLISH PATIENT by Anthony Minghella  
A COUCH IN NEW YORK by Chantal Akerman
- 1994 THE HORSEMAN ON THE ROOF by Jean-Paul Rappeneau
- 1993 THREE COLORS: WHITE by Krzysztof Kieslowski  
THREE COLORS: BLUE by Krzysztof Kieslowski
- 1992 DAMAGE by Louis Malle
- 1991 THE LOVERS ON THE BRIDGE by Leos Carax  
WUTHERING HEIGHTS by Peter Kosminsky
- 1989 ROUNDABOUT by Pierre Pradinas
- 1987 THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING by Philip Kaufman
- 1986 MAUVAIS SANG by Léos Carax
- 1985 HAIL MARY by Jean-Luc Godard  
FAMILY LIFE by Jacques Doillon  
RENDEZ-VOUS by André Téchiné

## ALEKSEĪ GUSKOV (Bojinski)

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 2016 | THE IDEAL by Frédéric Beigbeder<br>THE FIND by Viktor Dement  |
| 2015 | POLINA by Valérie Müller and Angelin Preljocaj<br>THE CONFESSIONS by Roberto Andò<br>GIRL ON ICE by Stefan Krohmer      |
| 2014 | NON AVERE PAURA, UN'AMICIZIA CON PAPA WOJTYLA by Andrea Porporati   |
| 2013 | THIRST by Dmitriy Tyurin  |
| 2012 | AUGUST EIGHTH by Dzhaniq Faiziyev   |
| 2011 | ITALIAN MOVIES by Matteo Pellegrini<br>4 DAYS IN MAY by Achim Von Borries   |
| 2010 | LA CARAVANE by Mourad Aliev<br>AMOUR-CAROTTES 3 by Serguei Guinzbourg   |
| 2009 | THE CONCERT by Radu Mihaileanu<br>LES SOUCIS D'AUTOMNE by Akhtion Seitablayev<br>THE WEATHER STATION by Johnny O'Reilly |
| 2008 | HE WHO PUTS OUT THE LIGHT by Andrei Libenson  |
| 2007 | OTETS by Ivan Solovov   |
| 2006 | TANKER 'TANGO' by Bakhtyar Khudojnazar  |
| 2004 | RAGIN by Kirill Serebrennikov   |
| 2002 | RED-HOT SATURDAY by Aleksandre Mitta  |
| 2001 | L'ÉBOUEUR by Georgui Shengelia  |
| 2000 | LA FRONTIÈRE. ROMAN DE TAÏGA by Aleksandre Mitta  |
| 1998 | LE CLASSIQUE by Georgui Shengelia   |
| 1994 | THE ROAD TO PARADISE by Vitali Moskalenko   |

# BEHIND THE CAMERA

## VALÉRIE MÜLLER (Director, Screenwriter)

While studying the History of Art and Cinema, Valérie Müller worked as an assistant director and production assistant.

She then made several documentaries - AVANT LA PARADE (1994), PORTRAIT EN MOUVEMENT (1996), L'EFFET CASIMIR and REGARD SUR ANGELIN PRELJOCAJ (1999) - and the short films UN MATIN BLANC (1995) with Camille Japy, LA SURFACE DE RÉPARATION (1998) with Marion Cotillard, CELLULE (2003) with Sylvain Groud and Sidi Graoui, and LES HOMMES S'EN SOUVIENDRONT (2007) with Marina Foïs.

In 2009, she co-wrote L'IDENTITÉ with François Favrat and Olivier Soler and in 2012, DELUGE with Salvatore Lista.

In 2013, she directed LE MONDE DE FRED with Olivier Soler, Marina Golovine, Virginie Ledoyen, Lorant Deutsch and Vahina Giocante.

With her production company LITHIUM FILMS, she co-produced the film TINY DANSERS (2007) by Eva Husson, short films LES HOMMES S'EN SOUVIENDRONT and CELLULE, and feature-length film LE MONDE DE FRED, which she also directed, as well as LA DERNIÈRE PERLE (2015) by Angelin Preljocaj, still in development, and the documentary ELDORADO (2007), directed by Olivier Assayas.

POLINA is the second feature-length film she has co-directed with Angelin Preljocaj.

## ANGELIN PRELJOCAJ (Director)

Born in France to Albanian parents, Angelin Preljocaj studied classical dance and then turned to contemporary dance with Karin Waehner. In 1980, he left for New York to work with Zena Rommett and Merce Cunningham, then continued his study in France with American choreographer Viola Farber and the French Quentin Rouillier. He then joined Dominique Bagouet dance company until he created his own company in 1985. He has since choreographed 49 pieces, from solos to large ensembles.

Preljocaj has often collaborated with other artists, such as Enki Bilal (*Romeo and Juliet*, 1990), Goran Vejvoda (*Landscape After the Battle*, 1997), Air (*Near Life Experience*, 2003), Granular Synthesis ("*N*", 2004), Fabrice Hyber (*The Four Seasons*, 2005), Karlheinz Stockhausen (*Eldorado - Sonntags Abschied*, 2007), Jean Paul Gaultier (*Snow White*, 2008), Constance Guisset (*Le Funambule*, 2009), Claude Lévêque (*Siddharta*, 2010), Laurent Garnier and Subodh Gupta (*And Then, One Thousand Years of Peace*, 2010), Azzedine Alaïa and Natacha Atlas (*The Nights*, 2013).

Preljocaj's creations have become repertory around the world and his work is commissioned by dance companies such as the New York City Ballet, La Scala de Milan, and the Paris Opera Ballet.

After directing short films *Le Postier* and *Idées Noires* en 1991, his first feature-length film *Un Trait d'Union* (1992) earned him the 1992 Vidéo-Danse 1st Prize and 1993 Prague Video Festival Prize, followed by *Annonciation* (2003), for which he was awarded the Grand Prix du Film d'Art in 2003. In 2009, he directed *Snow White*, and in 2011 he created the commercial *L'Envol* for Air France, based on the choreography of *Le Parc*.

Preljocaj has also collaborated on several films of his own choreographic work: *Les Raboteurs* with Cyril Collard (based on the painting by Gustave Caillebotte) in 1988, *Pavillon Noir* with Pierre Coulibeuf in 2006 and *Eldorado/Preljocaj* with Olivier Assayas in 2007.

The many books written about his work include *Angelin Preljocaj* (Actes Sud, 2003), *Pavillon Noir* (Xavier Barral, 2006), *Angelin Preljocaj, Topologie de l'invisible* (Naïve, 2008), *Angelin Preljocaj, de la création à la mémoire de la danse* (Belles Lettres, 2011) and *Angelin Preljocaj* (La Martinière, 2015), published on the 30-year anniversary of his dance company.

Throughout his career, Preljocaj has earned numerous awards, including the “Grand Prix National de la Danse” from the French Ministry of Culture in 1992, the “Benois de la Danse” for *Le Parc* in 1995, the “Bessie Award” for *Annonciation* in 1997, “Les Victoires de la musique” for *Romeo and Juliet* in 1997 and the “Globe de Cristal” for *Snow White* in 2009. The French Minister of Culture has knighted him “Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur” and awarded him the honorific titles “Officier des Arts et des Lettres” and “Officier de l’Ordre du Mérite.” In 2014, he earned the Samuel H. Scripps/ American Dance Festival Lifetime Achievement Award.

Since October 2006, the Preljocaj Ballet and its 24 company members work and create in the Pavillon Noir in Aix-en-Provence, a space consecrated entirely to dance.

POLINA is Preljocaj's first fiction film, co-directed with Valérie Müller.

## **CAST**

Anastasia Shevtsova

Veronika Zhovnytska

Niels Schneider

Jérémie Bélingard

Juliette Binoche

Aleksei Guskov

Sergio Diaz

Miglen Mirtchev

Kseniya Kutepova

Ambroise Divaret

Oriana Jimenez

Polina

Young Polina

Adrien

Karl

Liria Elsaj

Bojinski

Sergio

Anton

Natalia

Alex

Svetlana

**CREW**

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Directed by                    | Valérie Müller & Angelin Preljocaj   |
| Screenplay                     | Valérie Müller based upon the graphic novel<br>Polina by Bastien Vivès (ed. Casterman) |
| Director of Photography        | Georges Lechaptois   |
| Sound                          | Dana Farzanehpour  |
| Production Designer            | Toma Baqueni   |
| Costume Designer               | Laure Villemer   |
| Assistant Director             | Amandine Escoffier   |
| Script                         | Sébastien Louis  |
| Editing                        | Fabrice Rouaud<br>Guillaume Sagnol   |
| Sound Editing and Mixing       | Daniel Sobrino   |
| Casting                        | Sarah Teper  |
| Original Music                 | 79D  |
| Production Manager             | Camille de Chevigny<br>Mathieu Verhaeghe   |
| Postproduction Manager         | Clara Vincienne  |
| Produced by                    | Didier Creste<br>Gaëlle Bayssière  |
| Theatrical Distribution France | UGC  |
| International Sales            | TF1 STUDIO   |