



Antares

A film by Götz Spielmann



Austria, Running Time: 119 minutes

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SYNOPSIS

Eva is in her late thirties and has her whole life, from her daily work routine as a nurse to her role as wife and mother, perfectly under control. Then one day she finds Tomasz, doctor and casual out-of-town acquaintance from the past, waiting for her as she gets off her shift.

A few passion-filled nights later Tomasz is on his way back to the airport. He takes home with him a few photographs of Eva in compromising positions – frozen moments of intense intimacy in the wake of which nothing will ever be the same.

Sonja, the grocery store checkout girl, is frantically jealous of her husband Marco. And she has every reason to be. A baby, she thinks, could change everything. But can you exact love with a lie?

It's been a while since Nicole divorced the real estate agent Alex, and there's no longer any room for him in her new life as a single mother. His way of dealing with his powerlessness to change the situation follows the same pattern as ever: first ignorance and arrogance, and then hate and violence.

Antares is about lives that intersect at critical moments, skillfully woven into a film about the obsessions of love, the search for closeness, and the hope for happiness. It is about fear, loneliness, and courage.

In the constellation of Scorpius, 500 light years away, the variable double star *Antares* shines bright and red in the sky. Its unique luminosity is at the same time its demise. In the foreseeable future it will explode as a supernova.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

The Following are excerpts from a recent interview with Götz Spielmann.

***Antares* is a strikingly daring film project. Were you forced, nevertheless, to make concessions of one kind or another?**

For me this was the first film since the Film Academy on which I was able to work completely uncompromisingly. Filmmaking is always the art of what is possible and in this case the conditions were excellent. First, we had virtually no time constrictions or pressure, I had 39 days for shooting, a luxury. Then we were lucky enough to have every single actor be ideally casted. Shooting was a terrific experience.

Filmmaking doesn't just mean working for precision but also working against circumstances. These can have a tremendous, sometimes harmful influence. For me that's the most painstaking part about my work. A lot of times I am not sure whether my consistency in the films can still be detected, whether it is still being conveyed.

Is the narrative structure of *Antares* – this succession of simultaneously occurring episodes – one of many means of telling a story?

For me this structure was imperative. ANTARES is essentially about people trying to break out of their loneliness.

That's why there are three stories that influence each other and are interconnected, taking place at the same time – without the characters knowing it. And that's why the stories are told one after another. A parallel montage would introduce a formal arbitrariness; told in succession, on the other hand, the viewer experiences this interconnectedness vicariously, discovers it as something you don't take for granted.

The structure therefore depends to a great extent on the theme and my utopian conception in respect to this theme.

But the characters in *Antares* perceive their loneliness as a fact – and the film lacks a melodramatic, cathartic turning point. So then where does the utopia come in?

I don't equate life with conscious awareness. Therefore, if for no other reason, ANTARES is not a negative or as it is sometimes referred to a 'pessimistic' film because I don't believe in this loneliness. The film was made from a life-affirming point of view. It's not a film about the “impossibility of love.” Love is not an illusion but a utopia, the greatest one ever. It keeps us alive as long as we believe in it. Even if actual reality is often painful or disappointing.

How crucial to the story, which is about people who are more or less doggedly beating their heads against the wall of their loneliness, is the social environment you've chosen, the architectural environment of this housing development in the periphery?

Urban intellectuals have this absurd notion that the people living in these kinds of housing developments are socially challenged. Just because I used a housing development as my stage doesn't make ANTARES a “social drama.” That kind of thing doesn't interest me. What I'm interested in is unfolding fantasies that stem from reality. For me the housing development doesn't stand for socially challenged persons but rather for the standardization of people by society – and *also* for the power and energy of the individual that renounce these standardization attempts.

The three apartments, for instance, have exactly the same floor plan – which incidentally escaped almost everyone's attention because the couples living in them are so different in character and experience completely different conflicts. And that was another point: to

show how the individual's energy renounces social monotonization and standardization. The apartment complex isn't a slum but rather a picture that tells us a great deal about our society.

How did you respond to this challenge in your specific work with the actors?

Long rehearsals, lots of preliminary work with improvisation. For example, we played out scenes that just led up to the actual story. In the episode with Marco and Sonja, for instance, we dealt for three whole days with the difficulties that arose from the two of them coming from different cultures. It was clear from the start that none of that was going to be in the actual film because it wasn't the film's focus. But in this way the actors *experienced* what makes up their relationship. And through this, of course, working together becomes charged with incredible energy.

Was this how you prepared for the very explicit sex scenes too?

I chose actors in whom I sensed the courage and curiosity necessary for this task. I told them I wanted them to go as far as possible, without taboos. We'd find out how far that was when we got there.

Then for two days we talked through the scenes point by point, in complete detail and without inhibitions, discussed every second of these scenes – completely and candidly. What does the character feel, what gets him/her excited, why? What kind of power relationships are at work? At what point do they change? And so on... What turned out well – and this is what is often the problem in sex scenes – is that the actors were always aware that they were characters, that they were playing the story and sexuality of characters. That gives you protection, lets you take greater risks. Because of this, the shoots were very exciting and sometimes really moving.

CAST

Eva	Petra Morzé
Tomasz	Andreas Patton
Alfred	Hary Prinz
Iris	Xenia Ferchner
Eva's colleague	Angelika Nidetzky
Old man in hospital	Hannes Thanheiser
Sonja	Susanne Wuest
Marco	Dennis Cubic
Robert	Reinhard Nowak

Astrid
Sonja's co-worker
Nicole
Alex
Mario
Prostitute

Gisella Salcher
Monika Tajmar
Martina Zinner
Andreas Kiendl
Wolfram Schmidt
Barca Baxant

CREW

Scriptwriter & director
Cinematographer
Sound
Production design
Costume design
Make-up
Light
Casting
Editor
Sound design
Music

Götz Spielmann
Martin Gschlacht
Ekkehart Baumung
Katharina Wöppermann
Thomas Olah
Susanne Neidhart
Werner Stibitz
Rita Waszilovics
Karina Ressler
Andreas Kopriva
Walter W. Cikan
Marnix Veenenbos
Gilbert Petutschnig

Production manager

Producers

Erich Lackner, LOTUS-FILM
Wulf Flemming, TEAMFILM

ABOUT THE CAST

Petra Morzé (Eva)

Considered one of the most sought-after actresses in Austria, Petra Morzé was born and raised in Klagenfurt, Austria with her six brothers and sisters. After finishing compulsory school, she went to Israel for a year, took acting lessons and one her first film role in "Eis am Stiel." Immediately after receiving her acting degree from the University of Music and Dramatic Arts Graz, she played major roles at the Volkstheater Wien, Schauspielhaus Graz, the Salzburg Festival, and the Festspiele Reichenau, before she accepted a permanent position at the Theater in der Josefstadt. Since 2002, Petra Morzé has had a permanent position at the Burgtheater Wien. Her screen appearances include roles in the TV series "Tatort" and "Kommissar Rex," as well as in the TV films "Der Hund muss weg" (D: Beverly Blankenship) and most recently "Bella Figlia" (D: Xaver Schwarzenberger). The part of *Eva* in Götz Spielmann's *Antares* is Petra Morzé's first leading role in a feature film.

Andreas Patton (Tomasz)

Andreas Patton was born in 1962 in Hünfeld (FRG). He came to Salzburg in order to study acting at the Mozarteum and has been living and working for many years in Vienna. He began his acting career at the Staatstheater Stuttgart, the Freie Volksbühne Berlin, and the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus. Parallel to stage acting Patton also began working for TV and cinema in the late eighties, e.g. in the TV series "Medicopter 117," "Alarm für Cobra 11," "Stahlnetz," and "Wolffs Revier."

Peter Patzak got Patton to act for him his TV series "Polizeiruf 110 – Gelobtes Land" and "Der Mörder in dir," in 1999 Curt Faudon casted him in the TV thriller "Feuerteufel." Andreas Patton worked with director Michael Kreihsl in "The Long Rain," a film project commissioned by the Steirischer Herbst 2000, and also played in "NOGO" (D: Sabine Hiebler). The part of *Tomasz* in *Antares* is his first leading role in a feature film.

Hary Prinz (Alfred)

Born in 1965 in Vienna Austria, Hary Prinz started studying biology, psychology, and German philology before discovering his calling as an actor via the circuitous route of performing in a successful group of comedians founded by him. As an actor he played on stages such as Stadttheater St. Gallen, Gruppe 80, Schauspielhaus Wien, and Volkstheater Wien, and in 2000 he played his first leading role in a feature film: in Götz Spielmann's *The Stranger*.

This part was followed by further film roles ("Andreas Hofer – The Freedom of the Eagle," Directed by Xaver Schwarzenberger, "The Poet," D: Paul Hills) and countless TV series, e.g. "SOKO Kitzbühel," "Kommissar Rex," "Der letzte Zeuge," and in 2002 the leading role in the TV drama "Swabian Children" (D: Jo Baier). Most recently Hary Prinz played in Franz Antel's "Bockerer IV- Prague Spring" and in the Italian TV production "Al di là delle frontiere" (*Beyond the borders*, D: Maurizio Zaccaro).

Susanne Wuest (Sonja)

Susanne Wuest grew up as one of three children close to Baden near Vienna, Austria and received a comprehensive artistic education from early childhood on. She made her first stage appearance in 1995 followed by her first film role, which she used to finance further training in the USA. The part of *Sonja* is Susanne Wuest's first leading role in a feature film.

Dennis Cubic (Marco)

Born in 1978 in Frankfurt/Main (FRG), where he grew up bilingual – Croatian and German – Dennis Cubic came to Vienna in 2000 to study acting at the Max Reinhardt

Seminar. His first role in front of the camera was a recent appearance in the TV police series **Tatort** The part of *Marco* in *Antares* is Dennis Cubic's first leading role in a feature film.

Martina Zinner (Nicole)

Martina Zinner was born in 1972 in Graz, Austria. She completed her studies in her hometown, and went to Leipzig for a year before earning her degree in acting in 1994. In addition she also studied classical voice at the Music University Graz for one year. Since 1993, Martina Zinner has been a member of the independent Ensemble Theater in Bahnhof (TiB) in Graz. Following a brief appearance in the TV film version of Arthur Schnitzler's **Spiel im Morgengrauen** by Götz Spielmann and a mini part in **Nacktschnecken** by Michael Glawogger the part of *Nicole* in *Antares* is her first big role in a feature film.

Andreas Kiendl (Alex)

Born in 1975 in Graz, Austria Andreas Kiendl started studying chemical engineering before he decided to study acting at the University of Music and Dramatic Arts Graz. The multitalented artist Andreas Kiendl has extensive theater experience: as composer, actor, and director. His first role in front of the camera was in the TV production “The Arrest of Johann Nepomuk Nestroy” by Dieter Berner and in the feature “Nacktschnecken” by Michael Glawogger. The part of *Alex* in *Antares* is his first leading role in a feature film.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Götz Spielmann was born in Austria in 1961. He began his studies at the Vienna Film Academy in 1980. He studied directing with Axel Corti and in scriptwriting with Harald Zusanek. During his studies he made the award-winning features FREMDLAND which won 1st prize at the competition of European Film Academies 1984 and VERGISS SNIDER which won 1988: Exceptional Award at the Max Ophüls-Festival, Saarbrücken. Spielmann lives and works in Vienna. Spielmann’s writing and directing credits include *ANTARES* (2004), *SPIEL IM MORGENGRAUEN* (2001), *THE STRANGER (DIE FREMDE)* (1999), which was Austria’s official submission to the Academy Awards *DIE ANGST VOR DER IDYLLE* (1994) *DIESES NAIVE VERLANGEN* (1993), and *DER NACHBAR* (1991). His numerous awards include *San Sebastian: CICAE-Prize*, *FIPRESCI-mention for the remarkable construction of an exceptional character*; *Bratislava: SPECIAL-Prize*; *Wiener Filmpreis 1993*; *Goldener Kader 1994 for Best Script*.

ACCLAIM

Antares was Austria's selection for Best Foreign Film at the 2005 Oscars. In addition to receiving outstanding critical acclaim in Austria, its country of origin, *Antares* was an official selection at the Toronto International Film Festival, Seville and Locarno, where it was nominated for Best Film.

REVIEW

By DEREK ELLEY

Viennese director Goetz Spielmann, who helmed the impressively noirish "The Stranger" (2000), brings the same coolly analytical gaze to more complex, subtly interlocking material in "Antares." Centered on the love lives of three different women in an anonymous housing project, and fanning out into a group portrait of sexual and emotional follies, cleverly constructed script overstays its welcome in an unnecessary coda but for most of the going is involving drama, with fine performances from the ensemble cast. Strong fest item could secure some European arthouse exposure, followed by specialized tube sales.

Highly impressive opening 40 minutes, focusing on a married nurse's affair with a taciturn lover, forms basic narrative spine on which the other two stories hang. Though the later sections never quite equal this first stanza in formal power, their contrasting flavors add up to a well-rounded meal.

A pre-title sequence, of a man in a cab looking at explicit photos of a naked woman prior to a sudden car crash, sets up a lingering mystery that's not resolved until the end. Cut to the story of the femme in the photos, Eva (legit actress Petra Morze, in her first bigscreen role), a woman in her late 30s who appears to be a devoted wife to nice but boring Alfred (Hary Prinz) and mother to a moody teen daughter (Xenia Ferchner).

When Tomasz (Andreas Patton), the man in the cab, turns up unexpectedly at her workplace, it's clear Eva is a volcano of repressed emotion. With little conversation, the pair immediately checks into a hotel and, in a sexually graphic sequence, slakes their appetites. After more clandestine, marginally kinky encounters -- during which Eva allows him to photograph her intimately -- Tomasz leaves as suddenly as he arrived.

Pic then switches to the story of Sonja (Susanne Wuest), a nervy checkout girl briefly seen at the start of Eva's seg, who lives with Marco (Dennis Cubic), a volatile guy of Yugoslav parentage who's employed pasting up new billboards. Sonja, in a desperate maneuver to keep him, has pretended she's pregnant; Marco, despite professing joy at becoming a father, is also servicing a single, working-class mom, Nicole (Martina Zinner), in a neighboring apartment.

Final part of the jigsaw is the story of Nicole, who's still harassed by her violent ex-husband, Alex (Andreas Kiendl), an unsuccessful real estate salesman. Section is set

during the same short timeframe as the previous two yarns, with the other characters seen from different, tangential perspectives.

Casting is on the nose throughout, though it's Morze, as the immaculate, tightly wrapped Eva, who contrihs the most striking performance, segueing from middle-class wife to horny lover with practiced skill.

Lensing by ace Austrian d.p. Martin Gschlacht ("Free Radicals," "Hotel") frames the whole web of mutual lies and deceit in cold, wintry colors, and cutting by Karina Ressler is no-flab throughout.

ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT

Film Movement is an innovative new film distribution company, created as a solution for millions of consumers across the nation whose access to outstanding film is limited by geography, lifestyle or lack of information. Film Movement has members in over 50 states and 1200 cities. Film Movement acquires award winning independent films from the world's top festivals, which they then release each month of the year to members on DVD through a subscription service, and theatrically through The Film Movement Series. Participating filmmakers are able to reach under-served film fans everywhere through Film Movement.

The Film Movement Series is a new theatrical film series featuring some of the best in original world cinema. Created by the team that invented the groundbreaking Shooting Gallery Film Series, Film Movement will release 6 of its 12 films per year in leading independent cinemas in major US cities to help outstanding filmmakers find the audience they deserve. All films are available to members exclusively on DVD upon theatrical release so that they may participate regardless of where they live.

Film Movement has partnered with some of the leading independent theaters in the country to exhibit the Film Movement Series. The schedule includes the following films:

- Wiebke von Carolsfeld's *Marion Bridge*
- Eric Eason's *Manito*
- Scott Hamilton Kennedy's *OT: our town*
- Donovan Leitch & Rebecca Chaiklin's *The Party's Over*
- Tjebbo Penning's *Morlang*
- Mina Shum's *Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity*
- Vicente Amorim's *The Middle of the World*
- Jacques Doillon's *Raja*
- Tony McNamra's *The Rage in Placid Lake*
- Rolf de Heer's *Alexandra's Project*