

Frantz

Cert 12A France/Germany 2016 113 mins

Crew

Director	François Ozon
Screenplay	François Ozon & Philippe Piazzo
Cinematography	Pascal Marti
Film Editing	Laure Gardette
Original music	Phillippe Rombi

Cast

Paula Beer	Anna
Pierre Niney	Adrien
Ernst Stötzner	Doktor Hoffmeister
Marie Gruber	Magda Hoffmeister
Cyrielle Clair	Adrien's mother
Anton von Lucke	Frantz

Synopsis

Quedlingberg, Germany, 1919.

Anna grieves the loss of her fiancé Frantz, who was killed in trench warfare in WW1. She's also troubled by the appearance of Adrien, a French veteran of the war who she finds placing flowers on Frantz's grave.

Adrien's presence is met with resistance by the small town still reeling from Germany's defeat, but Anna starts to warm to the handsome, melancholy young man, as he starts to tell her about his deep and unexpected friendship with Frantz...



Booking Information

Distributor: Artificial Eye

DVD bookings:

BFI Film Distribution
020 7957 8938
Bookings.films@bfi.org.uk
www.bfi.org.uk/distribution

Available: now



Reviews

Versatile French writer-director François Ozon [*8 femmes*, *Potiche*, *In the House*] is arguably as successful as any contemporary auteur at consistently taking his audience by surprise. But his uncharacteristically sombre drama *Frantz* represents a distinct departure for a film-maker whose love of mischief has often been his foremost trait. A black-and-white period piece in French and German, *Frantz* is arguably one of the straightest films Ozon has made - in both the dramatic and the sexual senses - but his complex sensibilities and fine-tuned irony are very evident in a mature work that transcends genre pastiche to be intellectually stimulating and emotionally satisfying.

...The discerning Ozon touch especially shows in his casting. Beer is magnetic as a woman at once recovering from loss and looking towards the future: her Anna becomes increasingly strong and complex as the film proceeds, and her subtle playing, often downplayed to the point of being enigmatic, finally achieves the kind of emotional heft that would have befitted the heroines of Max Ophüls.

A special Ozon stroke, however, is the casting of Pierre Niney - a delicate, even feminine actor whose manner is at odds with the more conventional romantic profile another director might have chosen for Adrien. Niney's presence teasingly nudges us into seeking the homoerotic subtexts that are a constant with Ozon, and even if we're misled to some degree, Niney's fascinating, subtly neurotic performance as Adrien certainly adds another layer to the film's richness.

Jonathan Romney, Screen Daily, Sept 2016 (at the Venice Film Festival)

...The opening gambit of François Ozon's elegant interwar romance invites us to second-guess the story that links Parisian musician Adrien Rivoire (Pierre Niney) to Anna's late love, Frantz. Colour flashbacks are infused with inviting warmth, which contrasts with the black and white of a reality in which everyone mourns at least one loved one. There's a pleasing symmetry to this story - lie is matched by lie, journey by journey - and Beer's silky self-possession is utterly beguiling.

Wendy Ide, The Observer, May 2017

FILM FACTS...

- ☆ The film premiered at the Venice Film Festival 2016, and was nominated for the Golden Lion. Paula Beer won the Best Young Actress award for her role.
- ☆ The screenplay is based on a 1930 stageplay by Maurice Rostand. Legendary filmmaker Ernst Lubitsch made a film adaptation in 1931, as *Broken Lullaby*, but Ozon apparently didn't know this when he embarked on his project.