

DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT - CANNES 2004

# A FILM BY DAMIEN ODOUL AFTER WE'RE GONE



## cast

**Jean-René** - Pierre Richard  
**Milena** - Anna Mouglalis  
**Yves** - Damien Odoul  
**The Director** - Eugène Durif  
**Ingrid** - Ingrid Astier  
**Antoine** - Antoine Lacomblez  
**Lola** - Valérie Bert  
**Pipo** - Stéphane Terperaud

## crew

**Written and Directed by** - Damien Odoul  
**DP** - Patrick Ghiringhelli  
**1st Assistant Director** - Jennifer Biget  
**Assistant Cameraman** - Lazare Pedron  
**Location Manager and Stills** - Cathy Royer  
**Production Manager** - Xavier Decraen  
**Administration** - Gisele Grellet  
**Editor** - Gwénola Heaulme  
**Interns** - Myrtille Saint-Martin, Camel Gherbi  
**Camera, Set Design and Wardrobe** - Damien Odoul  
**Sound Editors** - Jean Holtzmann, Damien Bouvier  
**Foley** - Bruno Langiano  
**Sound Mix** - Adam Wolny  
**Colour Grading** - Carine Suquet, Jean-Marc Grejois  
**Original Music** - Jean Holtzmann  
**Performed at the piano by** - Anna-Zosia Borowiec

**Production** - Damien Odoul Films  
**Co-production** - Yo Yo Prod  
**Executive Producers** -  
Ugo de la Charrette de la Contrie, Tristan Frachon

[www.damienodoul.com](http://www.damienodoul.com)

Duration: 1H20  
Ratio: 1:85  
35mm - Colour - Dolby SR

## world sales

### wild bunch

99 rue de la Verrerie, 75004 Paris - France  
T +33 1 53 01 50 20 - F +33 1 53 01 50 49

### Cannes 2004

Sales - 3 la Croisette - 2nd floor  
T +33 4 93 68 03 32 - F +33 4 93 68 03 92  
Marketing - 6 la Croisette - 3rd floor  
T +33 4 93 38 86 20 - F +33 4 93 68 35 75

### Sales Agents

VINCENT MARAVAL  
T +33 6 11 91 23 93  
[vmaraval@exception-wb.com](mailto:vmaraval@exception-wb.com)

CAROLE BARATON  
T +33 6 20 36 77 72  
[cbaraton@exception-wb.com](mailto:cbaraton@exception-wb.com)

GAËL NOUAILLE  
T +33 6 21 23 04 72  
[gnouaille@exception-wb.com](mailto:gnouaille@exception-wb.com)

[www.wildbunch.biz](http://www.wildbunch.biz)

## international press

### Phil Symes/Ronaldo Mourao

The PR Contact  
Galerie All Suites  
All Suites Residence  
12 rue Latour-Maubourg  
06401 Cannes

T +33 (0)4 92 18 03 41  
[festival@theprcontact.com](mailto:festival@theprcontact.com)

Mobile: 06 30 11 73 96  
Mobile: +44 77 99 66 33 51  
Mobile: +44 77 99 66 33 95

# synopsis

Dawn. A decaying château stands obscured by lofty chestnut trees, seemingly deserted.

In a grand room, seated at his desk, Jean-René, a man in his 60s, writes in his diary. His face is gaunt, his hair ashen. He is dressed in a Japanese kimono and worn moccasins. From the pages of his book we learn that he is awaiting a very important letter, and that by the time he has closed the diary, the fateful missive will certainly have arrived. He grimaces.

Envelope in hand, Jean-René makes for the kitchen. A ray of light illuminates his troubled face. Sharply, he opens a drawer and removes a knife with which he opens the envelope, his hand trembling. With great concentration, he reads the letter – an interminable moment. Bewildered, he exits the kitchen, clutching the letter.

That evening, his gardener Pipo joins him in his bedroom. Silently, he awaits the verdict. With a monumental slowness, Jean-René lets slip, as if to himself: “They say I’m going to croak, my days are numbered”.

During the night, in the great candle-lit hall, Jean-René and Pipo get drunk on fine wines. Jean-René announces his decision to invite a theatre company to the château. They will perform for him a piece based on the myth of Dionysos, a celebration which will last one night. For the cup of Dionysos “gives back life and heals all ills”.

Jean-René and Pipo dance like an old couple. The flowers of the wall hangings cast strange shadows. Jean-René lets himself go, clutching the gardener to him. He keels over, eyes closed. After a moment suspended, he disentangles himself from Pipo and blows out the candles.

Darkness.

A month later.

Jean-René welcomes the entertainers, a disparate and chaotic group. Yves, the producer, arrives with a young actress, Milena. The couple split up a little while before, and are back together after a silence of three months. Things between them are complicated. Yves’ life is a series of profound self-interrogations and absurd situations. Milena is a very beautiful young woman of 25, simultaneously affected and frivolous. Caught in trap of her own making, she teeters constantly on the brink of hysteria.

The following day Eugène, the director of the company, arrives, accompanied by his new lover Ingrid and her roller skates. Eugène is smitten with her. Part-Jekyll, part-Hyde, loveable on the surface, diabolical underneath, he is a weak man, unsure of his true identity and how to assert it.

Ingrid rapidly succumbs to the charms of Jean-René, clearly a father-figure. Enraged by the relationship that develops between them, Eugène resolves to act for the first time in his life, to murder the aristocrat.

The writer Antoine arrives at last, several days late. He has not had time to complete the piece they are to perform. On the way, he has picked up the voluptuous Lola.

Nonetheless, the night of the long-awaited performance arrives, a night during which all will be spoken and all will be said.

# director's statement

"After We're Gone" is a story I've carried with me for more than a decade. The idea came to me when I was living in a château during the shooting of my short film "Tête d'Oeuf Bouilli", which would one year later become my first feature-length film.

Two drafts, countless revisions... the story has never left me. After thirteen years' gestation, some ten shorts and three features, it has come to light.

The concept of the film and the total commitment it demands captivated Pierre Richard and Anna Mouglalis, who agreed to play the two principal roles.

Pierre needs no introduction. He is a part of popular memory. His extraordinary journey has led him, in his maturity, to something new, something strange and unexpected. I know that he is ready to take risks few actors of his stature could accept.

As for Anna, she is unquestionably and without compare one of the most astonishing revelations of recent years. As she seeks to go further, beyond herself, this role will allow her to express the entire range of her talent.

The film is a sort of burlesque tragedy on the theme of life and death. To some extent, the story of Noah receiving couples into his Ark, a gathering of humanity that will be transfigured by the advent of a baptism: the Flood. I want to explore the theme through the prism of desire and of the couple.

Jean-René, a ruined aristocrat, has just learned that he's going to die. He doesn't know what to do... But his decision is made nonetheless. With what little money he still has, he invites a theatre company to his château to enliven his final days.

The meeting between Jean-René and the 'actors' will have immediate and absurd consequences for each one of them. They will seek, in themselves and in each other, the means to respond to their circumstances.

The film carries with it a mystery. This is why I am anxious to protect the actors from the end, the 'Fall' of the film.

"After We're Gone" would not have been able to come to pass if it was violated. Its essence lies in its secret.

**- Damien Odoul**

# Interview with damien odoul

## **What was the origin of “After We’re Gone”?**

The story goes back thirteen years ago to when I was shooting “Tête d’Oeuf Bouilli”. I was living in a dilapidated château, a very singular place. I lived there for six months and it was pretty tough, because in that place - not haunted but nonetheless ‘inhabited’ - I felt the presence of the dead. In fact there had been several suicides... the château had a rather dark history. Very strange things happened to me there, anyway. For example, the scene with Anna Mouglalis and the doll is drawn from that time. Despite all that, I didn’t want this film to tip over into the realm of the fantastic. The idea behind “After We’re Gone” is more philosophical, it deals with a man who knows that he’s going to die and who invites a theatre troupe to perform a final show for him at his château, a piece based around the myth of Dionysos.

## **Does the analogy with your stay in the château stop there?**

Not entirely, given that a film crew joined me there to shoot “Tête d’Oeuf Bouilli” just as a theatre company turns up in “After We’re Gone”.

## **What is the significance of the film’s French title “En attendant le déluge”?**

Firstly, I like the story of the Flood in the Bible. I read it as an adolescent. Furthermore, I read the New Testament a lot. I particularly liked Matthew and Paul. Add to that the memory of shooting “Tête d’Oeuf Bouilli” which was stopped on the thirteenth day. And during those thirteen days it never stopped raining. I was reminded of Marquez’ “One Hundred Years of Solitude”, which tells of a rain lasting many years. I even thought for a moment that in a similar fashion the rain was never going to stop. That flood made a deep impression on me. It’s why the last two characters arrive at the château in a downpour. After that, the château becomes a sort of ark.

## **How would you describe your film?**

It’s the tragedy of a man viewed through the prism of the burlesque. It’s also a version of the myth of Dionysos, which I discovered through my reading of Nietzsche and the great scholars of myth like René Girard. I was obsessed by the myth of Dionysos. In order to incarnate it in “After We’re Gone” I had to use figure of an old man, a man confronting the final moment of his life - which is to say, his death. And I also wanted the character of the lord of the manor to live with a “simpleton”. The simpleton is a

recurrent figure in my films. Here, he’s a gardener. This choice is a wink at the first cinematic story, that of “l’arroseur arrosé”. Thus Pippo, the simple man, contemplates the nozzle of his hose but is never sprayed by it. He dodges innocently away the moment the water spurts from the hose. I called it “l’arroseur non arrosé”. The water doesn’t turn towards him but towards the earth. For me, that has a real metaphorical meaning. My cinema, what I have to do, is a bit like that. “After We’re Gone” is a transitional film, a bridge over which I can pass, leaving behind me my ten short films and my *f e a t u r e* trilogy: “Le Souffle”, “Errance” and “Morrasseix”.

## **How did you talk to Pierre Richard about his character and the world of the film?**

I recalled to him something I missed and that I had known very briefly in my life: the fact of having a patron. Like during the Renaissance! A patron in the true sense of the term. On this film in particular, I would have loved to have been financed solely by a patron... To have shot and edited the film in the outbuildings of his château, for example. I’m joking, of course.

## **And the other actors?**

What I like is the mix of professional and non-professional actors... this combination has always interested me. And I will continue down this road.

## **How did you work on the screenplay?**

We began with a fifty page treatment without dialogue. The dialogue came later. Then I threw it all away to let something new into the story. In fact I needed to find the setting, which I finally discovered only four months before we began shooting. I stayed there all summer, which was a great luxury, and that changed things to no small extent. With no money, with no producer and no support except for Wild Bunch, my international sales agents, and Wild Side Video (my video distributors)... I had the great opportunity to be on the set for three months. I slept in the bedroom of the film’s lead character. Clearly the writing took another turn. My characters are very naturally defined. They are all couples played by people I know very well.

cont...

# damien odoul filmography

## How do you go about shooting?

For "After We're Gone", I wrote the scenes the day before shooting, sometimes even three hours before. The cast had been warned that this is how I work. Similarly, they were aware from the beginning that I film at any time, night or day. That was the case for the scene where I sing with Pierre in a corridor. I had to get Pierre out of bed in the middle of the night. It's for this reason that we all lived together in the château. It was a unique experience, a gift I would never try to repeat. You can't repeat those things. I know that I have to move on to other films.

## What sort of crew did you have?

We were very few. I shot the film and my DP took over when I was acting. On those occasions I asked him to reproduce exactly the framing I wanted... to the millimeter. He understood how to do it very well. My framing certainly has a lot to do with painting. Cezanne, Courbet and Delacroix fascinate me. I also like Poussin, Le Lorrain. I can look at "The Landing Of Cleopatra at Tarse" for hours. Painting and photography too have certainly been unconscious influences on defining the way I frame shots. These are the frames I live within. I don't intellectualise them. Above all I want to be able to justify each movement of the camera that intervenes to interrupt the stasis of the 'paintings'.

## To return to the filming, this is the first time you've shot on DV ?

Yes, I prefer silver nitrate. So in fact I filmed as if I was shooting on 35mm. I didn't at all play the digital game... I didn't shoot a "Dogme" movie. That doesn't interest me at all. Most of the time I put the camera on a tripod. I did no handheld shooting, there's practically never any of that in my films. That's not my idea of cinema.

## • Feature Films

### 2003 - **AFTER WE'RE GONE / EN ATTENDANT LE DELUGE**

with Pierre Richard, Anna Mouglalis and Damien Odoul  
Cannes - Directors' Fortnight - 2004

### "THE TRILOGY OF THE DOUBLE"

#### 2002 - **ERRANCE**

with Benoît Magimel, Laetitia Casta and Yann Goven  
Toronto, Stockholm, 2003 - Dublin, 2004  
Released on DVD by Wild Side Video

#### 2000 - **LE SOUFFLE**

Grand Jury Prize and Fipresci Prize, Venice, 2001  
Best Director Prize, Bratislava, 2001  
Toronto, Montreal, New York, Thessaloniki, Moscow, Hong Kong South Korea, 2001  
Vienna, Saragossa, Brasilia, Stockholm, Midnight Sun Film Festival, 2002  
Michel Simon Prize (Best Actor), 2002

#### 1992-2004 - **MORASSEIX**

Released 2004. New version. Unreleased

## • Shorts

### 1995-2003 - **LES BARBOTS**

Auch, Arte Short Circuit programme, 2003

### 2002 - **RÉMINISCENCES**

Paris Tout Court, 2003

### 2002 - **LE JOUG**

Cannes, Le Havre, Grenoble, Bordeaux, Aix-en-Provence (out of competition), 2002

### 2000 - **SANS MONDE**

### 2000 - **MAGIK**

Diptyque, Bonus DVD

### 1995 - **ELEGEIA (Chant de deuil)**

unreleased

### 1991-1994 - **TOB (Tête d'Oeuf Bouilli)**

### 1990 - **A L'OUEST DE L'ORIENT**

Cannes, Bratislava, Namur, 'Nuit des jeunes créateurs', 1990  
Special Jury Prize, Clermont-Ferrand, 1991  
Prix de Qualité CNC, 1992

### 1988 - **LA DOUCE**

Orleans, Bastia, 1990

# **anna mouglalis**

## **selected filmography**

2003 - **AFTER WE'RE GONE /  
EN ATTENDANT LE DELUGE**  
- Damien ODOUL

2003 - **UN AN**  
- Laurent BOULANGER

2003 - **IN THE COMPANY OF MEN /  
EN JOUANT "DANS LA COMPAGNIE DES  
HOMMES"**  
- Arnaud DESPLECHIN

2002 - **A NEW LIFE / LA VIE NOUVELLE**  
- Philippe GRANDRIEUX

2002 - **NOVO**  
- Jean-Pierre LIMOUSIN

2001 - **LE LOUP DE LA CÔTE OUEST**  
- Hugo SANTIAGO

2001 - **DE L'HISTOIRE ANCIENNE**  
- Orso MIRET

2000 - **MERCI POUR LE CHOCOLAT**  
- Claude CHABROL

2000 - **LA CAPTIVE**  
- Chantal ACKERMANN

1998 - **TERMINALE**  
- Francis GIROD

# **pierre richard**

## **selected filmography**

**EN ATTENDANT LE DELUGE** - Damien Odoul  
**MARIÉES MAIS PAS TROP** - Catherine CORSINI  
**27 MISSING KISSES** - Nana DJORDJADZE  
**LES MILLES ET UNE RECETTES DU CUISINIER**  
**AMOUREUX** - Nana DJORDJADZE  
**L'AMOUR CONJUGAL** - Benoît BARBIER  
**LA PARTIE D'ÉCHEC** - Yves HANCHAR  
**LA CAVALE DES FOUS** - Marco PICO  
**VIEILLE CANAILLE** - Gérard JOURD'HUI  
**BIENVENUE A BORD** - Jean-Louis LECONTE  
**MANGECLOUS** - Moshe MIZRAHI  
**A GAUCHE EN SORTANT DE L'ASCENCEUR**  
- Edouard MOLINARO  
**LES FUGITIFS** - Francis VEBER  
**LE JUMENT** - Yves ROBERT  
**LES COMPÈRES** - Francis VEBER  
**UN CHIEN DANS UN JEU DE QUILLES**  
- Bernard GUILLOU  
**LA CHÈVRE** - Francis VEBER  
**LE COUP DU PARAPLUIE** - Gérard OURY  
**LA CARAPATE** - Gérard OURY  
**LE JOUET** - Georges LAUTNER  
**ON AURA TOUT VU** - Georges LAUTNER  
**TROP C'EST TROP** - Didier KAMINKA  
**LE RETOUR DU GRAND BLOND** - Yves ROBERT  
**LA COURSE A L'ÉCHALOTE** - Claude ZIDI  
**LA MOUTARDE ME MONTE AU NEZ** - Claude ZIDI  
**LES NAUFRAGÉS DE L'ÎLE DE LA TORTUE**  
- Jacques ROZIER  
**UN NUAGE ENTRE LES DENTS** - Marco PICO  
**JULIETTE ET JULIETTE** - Rémo FORLANI  
**LA RAISON DU PLUS FOU EST TOUJOURS LA**  
**MEILLEURE** - François REICHENBACH  
**LE GRAND BLOND AVEC UNE CHAUSSURE**  
**NOIRE** - Yves ROBERT  
**LA COQUELUCHE** - Christian-Paul ARRIGHI  
**ALEXANDRE LE BIENHEUREUX** - Yves ROBERT

Pierre RICHARD also wrote, directed and acted in:

1970 - **LE DISTRAIT**  
1972 - **LES MALHEURS D'ALFRED**  
1973 - **JE NE SAIS RIEN MAIS JE DIRAI TOUT**  
1978 - **JE SUIS TIMIDE MAIS JE ME SOIGNE**  
1979 - **C'EST PAS MOI, C'EST LUI**  
1990 - **ON PEUT TOUJOURS RÊVER**  
1997 - **DROIT DANS LE MUR**