



« This film emanates so much tension, so much emotion, so much energy, so much humour and love, that it is impossible to resist. »

LES INROCKUPTIBLES

« Dostoevsky on horseback...  
The couple Mazuy-Reggiani deliver an audacious making of. »

TÉLÉRAMA

« The film should be entitled: Don Quichotte De La Manche ! »

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR

# RIDING DOSTOEVSKY

Maïa Films, Tact et Sentiment and MP Production present

a film written and directed by Patricia and Simon MAZUY-REGGIANI

with Simon REGGIANI, Patricia MAZUY, Bernard MAUREL, Thierry DUHAZÉ, Michel THOURY • Music Asphalt Jungle • Editing Mathilde Muyard • Director of photography Lena Rouxel, Mohamed Siad Sound Samuel Mittelman, Hélène Ducret, Dominique Dalmasso • Production Manager Fabrice Chevrollier • Associate Producers Michel Propper and Alain Manou-Mani • With the participation of the CNC, CINECINEMA, and ACCAAN (Atelier Cinéma Normandie) • With the collaboration of the Haras National du Pin • With the support of the Conseil Régional de Normandie  
With the friendly support of the Bank OBC (groupe ABN-AMRO) and the Insurances Gras-Savoie

Film Format Ratio 1: 1.85 • Color • Dolby SR-DTS • Length 117min



**TO BUILD UP HIS COURAGE, A MAN WHO HAS A FAVOR TO ASK OF HIS NEIGHBOR CRAWLS OUT OF HIS HOLE, TAKES THE BIT BETWEEN HIS TEETH AND SETS OUT TO RECITE DOSTOEVSKY'S NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND ON HORSEBACK IN FRONT OF 1,700 FARMERS AT THE PARIS INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SHOW. THE YEAR IS 2003, AND BUSH IS PREPARING TO ATTACK IRAQ.**

**A** former punk rocker, a rebel, a hoodlum, who knows? In any case, a man who's been through a lot and survived. A cinematic hero, in a certain sense. On a horse. And their dance, or their battle. That's all we know, the film starts here. The music symbolizes Simon's past and everything he's been through. We will learn nothing about his past. We can guess or make assumptions, but only the music provides any clues. What music? Punk rock. A rough past, therefore. This man has lived. That's all. Simon has come out of nowhere and must break in his horse.

Quickly, we learn a little more. We are in Basse-Normandie (Lower Normandy). He's going to do Dostoevsky's Notes from the Underground. On horseback. From this improbable plan will come... Simon's freedom? The film's message? We discover the world of the National Stud Farms, the inside politics, the complications with the regional council who is funding the show... Simon is not part of the inner circle. He must carve out his niche in the world and within the show itself. A film within a film. When Patricia appears, we see plainly that this film is playing with reality. The equestrian play was indeed presented at the Paris Agricultural Show, and Simon does indeed live with Patricia in Basse-Normandie.

But **Riding Dostoevsky** is a «true» film. Which is to say, a noble lie. The kind where you create a storm by waving metal sheets in the air, and politicians play actors. And the very best films are coming-of-age films, like coming-of-age novels.

Riding Dostoevsky is one of these. The whole film is an apprenticeship. A man on a horse and his conquest of that horse, or the horseman's conquest of his freedom, of his place in the World.

And here we realize that horseback riding and punk rock are pretty much the same thing. An impossible quest, a journey into asceticism. And an addiction, leaving no room for anything else, placing you at risk, body and soul. Those are the rules of the game.

Ten days of shooting, on video... But this is cinema, yes. As Renoir imagined it. Not a news report. A film by Simon Reggiani, one of the French cinema's beautiful losers. And Patricia Mazuy, who, for many, hasn't kept the promises of **Travolta et Moi** and **Saint Cyr**. Since she met her Black Angel... Simon! The film is about that too. Of course. Game of mirrors.

You get the point, **Riding Dostoevsky** is not a film about horses, or about the Mazuy-Reggiani's retreat to Basse-Normandie, or what have you... Or not only about those things. It's a story of malediction and redemption. Nothing less. It's great gothic cinema. Great punk cinema!

/ Patrick Eudeline

Writer-musician. Singer in the group **Asphalt Jungle** (1976-79)



#### / Mazuy-Reggiani: the couple.

Both born in the 1960s, Patricia and Simon Mazuy-Reggiani have been working together for nearly 11 years.

#### / During the 1970s.

Patricia drops out of the HEC (a prestigious business school) and leaves for Los Angeles, where she works as a babysitter to finance her first three short films. There, she meets Agnès Varda.

Simon leaves boarding school at the age of 15. He lives in squats with painters and poets and drags his saxophone across the punk scene, playing in clubs like Rose Bonbon and the Gibus and with groups like **Gazoline**, **Asphalt Jungle** and the **Kalfon Rock Show**. He makes an experimental film with Pierre Clémenti, **A L'Ombre de la Canaille Bleue**. Ricky Darling (Asphalt Jungle's guitarist) accompanies screenings of the film live on guitar.

#### / During the 1980s. **Peaux de Vaches, Mona et Moi.**

Patricia becomes a film editor, working first as an apprentice on Jacques Demy's **Une Chambre en Ville** then as editor on Varda's **Sans Toit ni Loi (Vagabond)**, before directing her first feature, **Peaux de Vaches**, the story of treachery and deceit within a farming family.

Simon has a baby and writes lots of poems. On the suggestion of director Patrick Grandperret, he spends 7 years working on **Simple Simon**, a personal story about the wreckage of his friend's lives during the pivotal period of the 1970s and 80s.

It's the first time his own life has served as the basis for his work. Patrick Grandperret makes the film **Mona et Moi** from this material.

#### / During the 1990s. «**De Force avec d'autres**», «**Travolta et Moi.**»

**Peaux de Vaches** gets the attention of the Agricultural Ministry, who hires Patricia to make a documentary about bovine genetics, **Des Taureaux et des Vaches** (52min). Next, she is one of the happy few directors selected by Pierre Chevalier to contribute to a series of fiction films on the subject of adolescence for Arte. She makes **Travolta et Moi** for this series.

Meanwhile, Simon's father Serge asks him to write a book based on personal notes he has accumulated since his eldest son committed suicide. The book, **La Question se Pose**, is published by Robert Laffont.

Simon directs a feature film based on his book, **De Force avec d'autres**, which tells the story of a son who must heal his father before he can live his own life.

Patricia and Simon meet at festivals. Simon writes a screenplay for Patricia, **Big Green**, an American mystery with Elliott Gould, but the project can't find a producer.

Patricia directs **La Finale**, a TV movie for France 2, written by Simon and Blaise N'Djehoya. It's a science fiction story set in the near future of 1998 during the World Cup, with the Front National running the south of France. In 1996, the couple moves to Normandy.

Patricia directs **Saint Cyr**, in which Simon plays the role of an evangelical priest with a passion for horses.

#### / Riding Dostoevsky

In 2001, Simon starts developing **Dostoevsky's Notes From the Underground** for a solo theater project. At the same time, Patricia is approached to direct Marie Seurat's adaptation of her book **Les Corbeaux d'Alep**. Patricia turns down the project on the basis of the screenplays proposed to her. The producers hire Simon to write the film. So, in addition to his theatrical preparation, Simon adapts **Les Corbeaux d'Alep** before going into residence at the national stud farm L'Haras National du Pin, where Patricia eventually joins him. They make **Riding Dostoevsky**.

Since completing **Riding Dostoevsky**, Patricia and Simon Mazuy-Reggiani have been preparing a new equestrian film with Maia Films and Yves Thomas (the screenwriter on **Travolta et Moi** and **Saint Cyr**).

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