

ACTECENT.

LA RELEVÉ

RÉALISÉ PAR ANNE-SOPHIE BAILLY



THE YELLOW VEST MOVEMENT

The yellow vest movement in France was triggered by the working class' growing concern with their purchasing power, and soared after the rise in fuel taxes. Its particularity was how it started in the rural and suburban areas, before spreading towards urban-based demonstrations with multiple social demands. The movement created an unprecedented violent reaction.

According to the Desarmons-les collective, around 2 to 3 thousand people were injured, 82 of them critically so, 152 suffered head injuries, 17 lost an eye and 4 lost their hand.

13 people died during or after Yellow Vest demonstrations.

In January 2019, the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner, Dunja Mijatović, publicly voiced concern around the important number of injured people.

La Fémis presents

ACTECENT.
LA RELEVÉ

Act 100 : The Changing of the Guard

A musical by Anne-Sophie Bailly

FRANCE - 2020 - 24' - FRAME 1.85 - SOUND

Original soundtrack written and arranged by
Anne-Sophie Bailly and Jean Thévenin
Produced by Walid Bekhti and Anaïs Lonkeu



A man with dark, curly hair is shown in profile, looking down and to the left. He is wearing a blue hooded sweatshirt with grey sleeves and a dark vest over it. The background is dark and out of focus, with some wooden structures visible. The overall lighting is dim, with a blue tint.

SYNOPSIS

Shayna, 5 years old, meets Jules at the groceries' counter of his gas station. Jules meets Dorothée, Shayna's mom, on the roundabout where she leads a battle with other colleagues. They are all wearing yellow, and united together as one, they spread the word of a cause they are determined to win.

INTERVIEW WITH **ANNE-SOPHIE BAILLY** DIRECTOR

How did the idea come to you to direct a musical about the yellow vests? Does this choice come from a political commitment that you wished to share on screen ?

I was often confronted with politics through theatre – even more so than during my political science studies. What I find amazing about the yellow vests is the idea of taking back the power of a system by individuals (assembled in solidarity groups). With the yellow vests, we saw bodies, faces, and accents that I knew and that were, till then, condemned to silence or relegated to the ranks of simple café clients. During the movement, they had the chance to express themselves politically, and it moved me. Especially because they were treated harshly by a big part of the media that showed them.

Why didn't you go for a documentary?

The movement started while I was working on a documentary project (In Labour). I immediately became interested without thinking about

filming it. I informed myself, I looked at images, read articles, and in the spring, I had to think about the fiction project that I had to direct during my third year of film school. When the question of the topic came about, I instantly thought about the yellow vests. They changed my views on politics, re-politicized politics and made me become interested again in this domain where there are lots of ambivalences to me. It was also interesting to fictionalize a subject that shouldn't be exclusively taken care of by the documentary genre. I also thought that the way the image makers presented them was unworthy. It was my turn to produce images at the opposite of those fabricated by the media.

The idea of a musical seems to come from this desire of total fabrication...

I thought that an ultra-stylized film would present the movement in a cheerful way. On the roundabouts, people were singing and dancing, these places had become little homes to them! TV channels showed sad and miserable yellow vests, in total opposition with the joy – still visible on some images – that many people I've met were referring to. I wanted to represent this creativity, and even its playful atmosphere, its intelligence, in fiction. I think that singing is very political by the way. It seemed to be an easy idea at first, but in reality, the more I was thinking about it, the more it seemed solid. I also liked the idea of total fabrication – especially because it isn't an activist movie. You may understand on which side I am on, of course. But my legitimacy doesn't come from the fact that I belong to this movement. It's rather that I learn how

to fabricate images. And as an image maker (and sound maker!), I found that it was important and I wanted to take revenge on some of these images.

How did you give birth to the structure ?

It has been laborious and Léna Mardi's help was precious (co-writer). Pierre-Louis' advice (sound editor) had also been essential. I absolutely wanted Dorothee and Jules to meet on the roundabout, but it was too complicated to manage. We needed to find an opening for the film, which was found in the gas station. On the roundabout, we needed to be very creative on the placement of the shots, because it is a unique place, and be imaginative with the sound design. Having an opening helps getting into the fiction – at first, we thought about a theft in a supermarket. The idea of a unique place, set as the priority in the first place, hit the reality of the film. Especially with a place like this one: Voluntarily suburban and isolated.

The almost unique area that you're filming is a crucial component: it settles the movement into a succession of recent political events and has very strong symbolism...

The question of the area was interesting to me, particularly the fact that political events happen in areas supposed to be useless – non areas – voluntarily suburban, isolated and similar to a thousand others. Observing

the way roundabouts were employed, I found that what was happening was unprecedented. In the same way, areas around me in Franche-Comté that I've never seen used for political purposes were suddenly used for it. These places were taken back by people who, for the most part, were not politically active until then. As for me, I was mainly admiring. The yellow vests (even if it's difficult to talk about them as a homogenous group) remind me of people I've met, particularly when I was living in an isolated countryside city, people to whom was always denied the right to speak.

Is the will to do these people justice one of the reasons why you worked on designing the costumes for instance ?

Once again, the attention towards the costumes takes its roots in the real, it has always been about giving a lyrical personality to pre-existing elements. The yellow vests revealed to be breathtakingly creative in their costumes... A lot of them made their own sweaters, others painted stencils... And it's wonderful to chose a glowing vest, the ultimate symbol of norm, and to use it for something totally subversive; it was already a cunning move! The difficulty though was to create something beautiful with glowing yellow... A rather unpleasant color on camera! We had some fun with Quentin Lacombe (DOP) trying to find colors that combine themselves well with the vests. Beauty was the ever-present intention: It's the reason why the characters are wearing make-up while I never wanted this kind of thing on previous projects I directed. Here, they are figures. Lucie Vogelzang did a really

beautiful job with the costumes, inspired and audacious, like Maud Vidal-Foulon and Hugo Raffoul did on the production design. On the roundabouts, some yellow vests built fake Eiffel Towers with pallets: If we had done this, people would have said that it was excessively unbelievable! The real is more creative than us. So, we thought of this area as a boat – It's the leitmotiv of one of the songs by the way. I like the idea of a roundabout that might be a raft – or an island, you choose.

What were the steps in sound recording and editing ?

Pierre-Louis (Boom guy on the film set) worked on music and rhythm with the actors so that we really felt like they were singing on the set, and to create an impression of direct recording. He prepared the sound editing long before the shooting so that the actors may operate right movements. During sound mixing, we wished for the songs to really fit in the real. There are lots of musicals that I love, that still frustrated me in giving the impression of getting me out of the story to put me in the musical. The goal of the sound editing was to link previously arranged recordings with the direct sounds.

All your actors are not singers or dancers... How did rehearsals take place, and how many?

Yes, the week before the shooting we were rehearsing every day – it's what created the group spirit. Some of them knew each other already from their commitment to the yellow vest movement, but it's the song



and the dance that united them. All of them are not dancers, far from it. There has been support in the dance that was very beautiful: Those who knew how to dance made others who had more difficulties rehearse. The conditions founded the collective. Also, I didn't want them to look like professional dancers; it would be sad in relationship with what we are telling of the common. On the contrary, I wanted to see the grace of imperfections. I wished to highlight what they are, and display on the screen this interesting roughness. It's what we worked on during sound mixing as well – leaving one asynchronous or wrong tone of voice... To make it beautiful without smoothing the characters.

How did you choreograph the songs ?

Jean Thévenin's music is based on percussion and beats, so we quickly agreed on doing something with a jerky rhythm. In my opinion, it should be felt through the dance by focusing on movements with a low center of gravity, things on the lines of krump, or haka... Lola has completely directed the choreography of "The Changing of the Guard", and helped me think about the pyramid structure for "You shall not pass" - other than that it was rather intuitive.

Even though the idea of the group is predominant, two strong characters – antagonists in the beginning – distinguish themselves from the rest... On this matter, Jules' path is particularly interesting, because it highlights tensions between individuals within a same social class.

Matthieu Tunes has this incredible quality to be able to look extremely nice as well as excessively unfriendly. Quentin (Sombsthay, editor of the film) describes him as a character who would metaphorically stand for the social class awareness. In the beginning I wanted a love story between two antagonist characters. I had *Une Chambre en Ville* by Jacques Demy as a reference, but in this film, the two antagonists are a shipyard worker and an upper-class woman: I wanted it to be less evident... Jules' character was an *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (a French school preparing for administrative and political careers) intern at first, but it didn't work, because we didn't want the miraculous turnover of the antagonist. He really had to be on the side of the losers, for him to understand the common problematics he shares with Dorothée.

On the opposite, Dorothée is more an allegory of the collective... Why did you wish to represent her as a mother as well ?

I am fascinated by maternity; questions of filiation go through my work. There is also the fact that a lot of lonely or separated mothers were on these roundabouts, in situations of extreme precarity. I liked the idea of a Madonna revisited as the opposite of the perfect mother. She has something dysfunctional that fills her with a certain grace. The question of fictionalizing the mother is interesting to bend but also from a feminist perspective: They are often shown as *mater dolorosa* or as a toxic mother. And there is also the fact that many retired people on the roundabouts claimed to fight for the future generations; it's also part of the reasons why I wished to include a child in the story. It's part of the things that make

Dorothée shift : her role as a mother fits into a more global fatigue. Though I feared it would only become the story of a choice between maternity and political fight. I wanted my character to wonder if the fight is worth all the sacrifices it implies, and that she accepts it with the help of others.

The idea of the fight - in politics, economics, families - concludes on a confrontation. How did it go during the shooting ?

This scene was very complicated to shoot. The people who were acting in this film are heroes. Some are accustomed to confrontation during protests - we've talked about that with them. At the time we needed to prepare the scene we noticed that the ground was frozen. It was very difficult to act without hurting yourself. But the film is a tale, so the moments that work well are those where simple gestures mean something. It was really important to have key gestures, but it was difficult to find the right amount. By the way, everyone was very tired, so we had less material at the end of the shooting. It was one of the night sequences, and furthermore during a confrontation. The day after that we met again to shoot «You there»; the actors look exhausted, but it's beautiful !

You favored a certain economy of means in this scene. It fits into the artistic engagement you seem to have taken, in particular for the image, because you chose not to shoot too many scenes with the camera on the shoulder...

There are many camera travellings; in the beginning I only wanted rails. Here again, the root is theoretical: I wanted to go against extremely brutal, jerky images of the yellow vests, shown either with phone cameras or with on-shoulder cameras. I wanted a ballet and a graceful camera...

INTERVIEW WITH **JEAN THÉVENIN** COMPOSER

Jean Thévenin simultaneously studied cinema at the Fémis film school and jazz at the Institute of Rhythmic Arts. In parallel to his activity as a drummer (For François & the Atlas Mountains, Sébastien Tellier or Quentin Dupieux), he composes soundtracks for theater (Louis Arène and the Munstrum Theatre), dance (Alice Martins) and cinema (Adèle Beaulieu, Louise Hémon). He published two solo EPs under the name Jaune: «Procession» in 2016, and «La Promesse» in 2019.

How have you been involved in the project? Was it your first collaboration with Anne-Sophie Bailly ?

My friend François Atlas recommended me to Anne-Sophie, and told her to contact me. We had never worked together, but when she sent me the script of the film I became full of excitement for the project. We met to talk about it and we agreed on the musical influences to use in order to write the soundtrack of the film. It was rather fast.

Which constraints are there to compose songs that are made to fit into a musical ?

In the case of this film, the constraints were all linked to the political nature of the script. I am used to compose music in the pop music style, and Anne-Sophie's comments on the first models that I sent said it was too ethereal, that I had to get more rage into the music, and that it had to sound more like protests songs. So I started from scratch again, by starting the track with a simple drum, or a bass line to look for something more «raw», and adding arrangements in a second time.

You composed, I think, the melodies after the lyrics have been written ; is it a work method you are used to work with ?

It was the first time I work this way, and I greatly enjoyed it. In a first time I was thrown off by Anne-Sophie's lyrics, but once I got into the beginning of a melody, I realized they were written in very musical way

and they fit easily in the melody.

Have you used influences (musical or cinematographic) in particular ? Other musicals that inspired you ?

With Anne-Sophie we share a common love for Christophe's music, who might have been an influence. She had prepared a playlist for me with tracks that inspired her, and that she wanted to see nourish the film; There was Michel Polnareff, the band Catastrophe, or even the Hair musical. Personally, I also used the original soundtrack of La France as inspiration, directed by Serge Bozon, composed by Mehdi Zannad. I really appreciate the way we can feel the soldiers' fragility on the front through their songs.





THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The changing of the guard,
coffee nice and hot
Before the day puts on its make-up,
before the chaos

All on the same raft
Faces vengeful, voices raised, all
together
Neither fascist nor lefty
Minimum-wage smokers,
hands around the stove

The changing of the guard,
coffee nice and hot
Before the day puts on its make-up,
before the chaos
All in the same boat
In a nasty mood, heads on the
chopping block

All of us taking off
The tricolour cockade
To don the hi-vis yellow

The changing of the guard
Coffee nice and hot
I understand, my comrades, in this boat
I've been gobbling down propene
For thirty years, in a shitty job

I live in a rabbit hutch
and can't afford the rent
On my meagre means
When I catch the smell
of an oil-based product
I draw my gun

The changing of the guard
I draw my gun
Coffee nice and hot

The changing of the guard,
coffee nice and hot
Before the day puts on its make-up,
before the chaos
All in the same boat
Before they spray us with tear gas

The changing of the guard,
coffee nice and hot
Before the day puts on its make-up,
before the chaos

All in the same boat
The last Communard island
struggling against the flood

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue jacket and a yellow safety vest, is shown in profile, looking towards the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

YOU SHALL NOT PASS

You shall not pass
We've let it go
For years and years


You'll pass no more
Protest and ruction
We'll keep up the disruption

You shall not pass
Fearless and guilt-free
You take our money

You shall not pass
You portray us as ugly
Every night on the telly

You shall not pass
You shall pass no more
We will stay here, causing disruption

You shall not pass,
you shall pass no more
We will stay here, causing disruption

A man in a dark blue police uniform with white reflective stripes and a crest on the sleeve is shown in profile, looking towards the left. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a blue structure.

This turmoil, this hurly-
burly,
will become a guerrilla
stand

This turmoil, this hurly-
burly,
will become a guerrilla
stand

If it's what you want
Then you've been warned
It will end when we say so

And don't talk about
misunderstandings
About paranoia,
about the social-security deficit

You shall not pass,
you shall pass no more
We will stay here
Causing disruption

This turmoil, this hurly-
burly
Will end when we say
so !

ANNE-SOPHIE BAILLY

DIRECTOR

Anne-Sophie Bailly was born in Besançon, Franche-Comté, and grew up in Pontarlier. In parallel of her studies in political science, she practiced theater in Paris, at the Conservatoire of the 6th district, and in Dublin, and at the National Theatre of Toulouse in 2014. She works with stage directors like Julien Gosselin, Jean Bellorini, Daniel Jeanneteau, Sylvain Maurice...

As an actress, she played in *Masculin / Féminin Variations*, by Jean-Luc Godard, adapted for the stage by Laurent Belly or *Le Dragon* directed by Martin Nikonoff. Anne-Sophie Bailly also worked on a solo inspired by personal diaries written by Louise Bourgeois, *L'Etat de siege ou le retour à la mère*, played in Toulouse and Paris.

In the film domain, she has acted in many short films and she played the painter in *En attendant les barbares* by Eugène Green in 2017. The same year, she got into the Fémis film school in the director department.

A portrait of a woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a white button-down shirt with a pleated collar and cuffs. She is looking directly at the camera against a plain, light-colored background.

FILMOGRAPHY

2019 : *In Labour*, documentary about midwives and interns in the maternity aisle of Montreuil.

2020 : Video art for *Les Chemins de Désir* by Claire Richard, directed by Sabine Zovighian (co-directed by Alexandre Büyükodabas)

RÉBECCA FINET

After her first year at the Conservatoire National de Région in Lille, Rébecca Finet was admitted into the CNSAD in Paris, where she is taught by Jacques Lassalle, Dominique Valadié, Phillippe Adrien and Piotr Fomenko. Right after her graduation, she performs in plays at the Odéon theatre, and then at the opera of Palermo, and at the Hong Kong Arts Festival for an adaptation of *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* by Mathias Woo. On the screen, she acted in *Marylin* by Guillaume Gallienne, *Drôles d'oiseaux* by Gérard Jugnot, *Leïla* by Naidra Ayadi and *Mine de rien* by Mathias Mlekuz.

MATTHIEU TUNE

As a former student at the Cours Florent, Matthieu Tune acted in *L'Augmentation* by Georges Perec (directed on stage by Etienne Blanc) in 2011, then for the collective La Horde in a show called *Job ou ce qu'il en reste* in 2012. In December of the same year, he became a member of the Atelier at the National theatre of Toulouse, where he notably worked with directors like Jean Bellorini, Charlotte Farcet or Wajdi Mouawad. He continued his work with Jean Bellorini on *Un fils de notre temps* in 2015, then *Onéguine* in 2019, while joining other creations : *Le Dragon*, directed by Martin Nikonoff in 2016, then *Yvonne Princesse de Bourgogne* by Clémence Labatut in 2018. He also created in 2019 a solo show, *Le Petit Héros*, inspired by Fiodor Dostoïevski's work, directed by Mélodie-Amy Wallet.



FILM CREW

Dorothee **Rébecca Finet**

Jules **Matthieu Tune**

Shayna **Sarah Edery**

Salah **Stéphane Soo Mongo**

Fethy **Mustapha Benstiti**

Bruno **Simon Primard**

Zineb **Julia Leblanc-Lacoste**

Franck (first watchman) **Romain Bénichou Ayoub**

Daniel (second watchman) **Didier Brémont**

and

Arnaud Lambert, Fany Germond, France Albert, Hélène Adamo, Léonore Malinowski, Olive Dorner, Salomé Fournet-Fayas, Varenka Roland, Tanguy Florent, Charles Gebenholtz, Étienne Tilmant, Pascal Toussiro, Marie Bokillon, Laura Garnier, Elma Timoteo, Jean Thevenin

TECHNICAL TEAM

Director **Anne-Sophie Bailly**

Screenwriters **Anne-Sophie Bailly** and **Léna Mardi**

Original soundtrack and arrangements **Jean Thévenin**

First director assistant **Liliane Araujo-Morin**

Script supervisor **Tanguy Matignon**

Produced by **Walid Bekhti** and **Anaïs Lonkeu**

Director of photography **Quentin Lacombe**

Camerawoman **Élise Vray**

Sound department **Lucas Salamon**

Boom guy **Pierre-Louis Clairin**

Production design **Maud Vidal-Foulon**

Construction **Hugo Raffoul**

Costumes **Lucie Vogelzang**

Editing **Quentin Sombsthay**

Sound editing and sound design **Pierre-Louis Clairin**

Mixing **Colin Prum**

Color grading **Alice Conan**

Translation **Alain Kulmburg** and **Melanie Bragard**

ÉCOLE NATIONALE SUPÉRIEURE
DES MÉTIERS DU L'IMAGE ET DU SON

La femis

MEMBRE DU
PSL★