

Janine Jansen: Falling for Stradivari

Asterisk Films and Foxy Films announce new documentary film following extraordinary virtuoso violinist, Janine Jansen, as she faces the challenge of conquering in 10 days 12 of the greatest violins ever made.



Photo credit: Una Burnand

UK Cinema Release from 2 September, including Curzon Mayfair, London

Asterisk Films and Foxy Films announces the UK cinema release of *Janine Jansen: Falling for Stradivari*, directed by BAFTA and Grierson award winner Gerald Fox. From 2 September, UK cinema audiences will be able to watch a fascinating film about the finest violin maker of all time, Antonio Stradivari told through the eyes and bow of Janine Jansen, one of the world's leading violinists, as she embarks on a daunting quest to record an album on twelve of his greatest ever violins.

The film delves into the histories of these unique instruments: some, in pristine condition, have not been played for 200 years while others belonged to legendary virtuosos including Fritz Kreisler, Nathan Milstein, Ida Haendel and Oscar Shumsky, all seen here in rare archive footage. Each violin has its own distinctive character which can take years to master but Janine has only days with all of them before beginning the gruelling process of recording with Sir Anthony Pappano, Music Director of The Royal Opera House accompanying on piano.

Janine Jansen: Falling for Stradivari brilliantly captures the emotional highs and lows as Jansen reacts to each violin, her excitement combined with trepidation as the first day of recording gets nearer. In an unexpected twist, Jansen falls ill with Covid but recovers to

continue with the recording with only one day left before the first violin has to be returned to its owner.

Through this gripping and energetic film, audiences will gain both a deep understanding of what has made Stradivari such a unique and enduring master craftsman whose violins can now command prices well above twenty million Dollars, prized by collectors, players and audiences everywhere, and also witness the enormous humour, spark and energy that exists between these two formidable collaborative musicians.

“One of the hardest challenges was making this film during Covid, firstly getting to Sweden to film there and then getting the artists and priceless violins to London for the recording sessions. And that became even harder when Janine herself succumbed to Covid after only a few days of filming but picked herself up after three weeks to make the album. It is really moving to watch Janine triumph over adversity, healing herself through the sheer all-consuming power of music.” Gerald Fox.

“When I was approached by J&A Beare with the idea of making a documentary about Antonio Stradivari, I immediately turned to Gerry Fox to see if he wanted to direct and co-produce it. We had worked together so successfully before on our documentary about Natalia Osipova and I knew Gerald has deep and intuitive appreciation and knowledge for both classical music and what makes a great story. It was a joy to make the film take shape together.” Justine Waddell, Asterisk Films

Falling for Stradivari follows a project devised by Steven Smith, Managing Director of the world's pre-eminent violin dealers, J&A Beare. Having worked with Stradivari instruments his entire career he wanted to bring 12 of the very best violins together to show their brilliance and also their differences. He also wanted to record for posterity their sounds in one single, unique record and approached Janine Jansen and Decca for the extraordinary challenge. Smith knew where in the world the 12 violins for this project were and who owned them and this enabled him to create a two week period when all violins could be flown to London in a once in a lifetime's opportunity.

The project took years to bring to fruition and central to its success would be having the right violinist involved. As the film beautifully shows, Janine Jansen is the ideal musician, one who is widely regarded as one of the world's truly exceptional violinists. As her accompanist for the project, Jansen chose Sir Antonio Pappano, director of the Royal Opera House and a celebrated pianist. The interaction between the two artists gives a fascinating insight into the creative process under pressure and how magic can be created in a project that can never be repeated.

Falling for Stradivari was produced in association with Sky Arts and will be broadcast on the channel on 23rd September. Decca Classics will release the album '12 Stradivari' on 10th September with Janine Jansen and Sir Antonio Pappano.

Ends

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About Asterisk Films

Founded by acclaimed film and stage actress Justine Waddell, Asterisk Films seek to develop, support and finance ambitious projects with original viewpoints and international scope. Passionate advocates of stories about women in the arts, feature productions include *Force of Nature Natalia* about Royal ballet star, Natalia Osipova, *Janine Jansen: Falling for Stradivari* and our first fiction feature *Virginia Woolf's Night and Day*, based on Virginia Woolf's most comedic novel, in partnership with the British Film Institute with BAFTA nominated Tina Gharavi (*I am Nasrine*) attached to direct.

<https://asteriskfilms.com/>

About Gerry Fox and Foxy Films

Gerry Fox is a filmmaker and artist who has won major awards throughout his career for his films about the world's leading contemporary artists including Gilbert and George, Claes Oldenburg, Christian Boltanski, Marc Quinn, Gerhard Richter, Robert Frank and Bill Viola. His awards include the BAFTA, The Royal Television Society Best Arts Film, The Grierson Best Arts Documentary, The Grand Prize at The Festival of Films on Art in Montreal, the Chicago Gold Hugo and The Prix Italia.

All these films were shown nationally in the UK on ITV's longstanding arts series, The South Bank Show, Channel 4 and the BBC 1 flagship arts series Imagine as well as internationally on broadcast and cable television, and in major film festivals including Rotterdam, Tribeca, London, Viennale, Naples, Bologna, and Chicago as well as major art museums including The Tate and The Met. Recently, *Force of Nature Natalia* (2019) was released in Curzon, Picturehouse and Indy cinemas across the UK and *Burning Man: Art on Fire* (2020) was released globally on Amazon, iTunes and GooglePlay.

Foxy Films makes arts films for cinema release and for the BBC and Sky Arts under the aegis of Gerald Fox.

<https://gerryfox.com/>