



JEAN-PIERRE LÉAUD

PATRICK  
D'ASSUMÇÃO

MARC  
SUSINI

IRÈNE  
SILVAGNI

BERNARD  
BELIN

JACQUES  
HENRIC

— THE DEATH OF —  
**LOUIS XIV**

A FILM BY  
ALBERT SERRA



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212-431-0090

2016 / 115 MINUTES / 2.35:1 / DCP / DOLBY DIGITAL 5.1

IN FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES



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## CAST AND CREW

WITH

JEAN-PIERRE LÉAUD ..... LOUIS XIV  
PATRICK D'ASSUMÇÃO ..... FAGON  
MARC SUSINI ..... BLOUIN  
IRÈNE SILVAGNI ..... MME DE MAINTENON  
BERNARD BELIN ..... MARESCHAL  
JACQUES HENRIC ..... LE TELLIER

## SYNOPSIS

Versailles, August 1715. Back from hunting, Louis XIV – magisterially interpreted by New Wave icon and honorary Palme d'Or recipient Jean-Pierre Léaud – feels pain in his leg. A serious fever erupts, which marks the beginning of the agony of the greatest King of France. Surrounded by a horde of doctors and his closest counselors who come in turns at his bedside sensing the impending power vacuum, the Sun King struggles to run the country from his bed.

Based on extensive medical records and the memoirs of the Duke of Saint-Simon and other courtiers, *The Death of Louis XIV* is a wry neoclassical chamber drama, a work of pure magic by Albert Serra, one of today's most singular directors.

SCREENPLAY : ALBERT SERRA, THIERRY LOUNAS

IMAGE : JONATHAN RICQUEBOURG

CAMERA : JULIEN HOGERT, ARTUR TORT

SOUND : JORDI RIBAS, ANNE DUPOUY

EDITING : ARIADNA RIBAS, ARTUR TORT, ALBERT SERRA

MUSIC : MARC VERDAGUER

VISUAL EFFECTS : ANDRÉ ROSADO, XAVIER PÉREZ

PRODUCTION DESIGNER : SEBASTIAN VOGLER

COSTUMES : NINA AVRAMOVIC

HAIRSTYLIST : ANTOINE MANCINI

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR : MAÏA DIFALLAH

PRODUCERS : THIERRY LOUNAS, ALBERT SERRA

JOAQUIM SAPINHO, CLAIRE BONNEFOY

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS : CLAIRE BONNEFOY, MONTSE TRIOLA

PRODUCTION MANAGER : SANDRA FIGUEIREDO

PRODUCED BY :

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ROSA FILMES, ANDERGRAUN FILMS, BOBI LUX

DIRECTOR : ALBERT SERRA

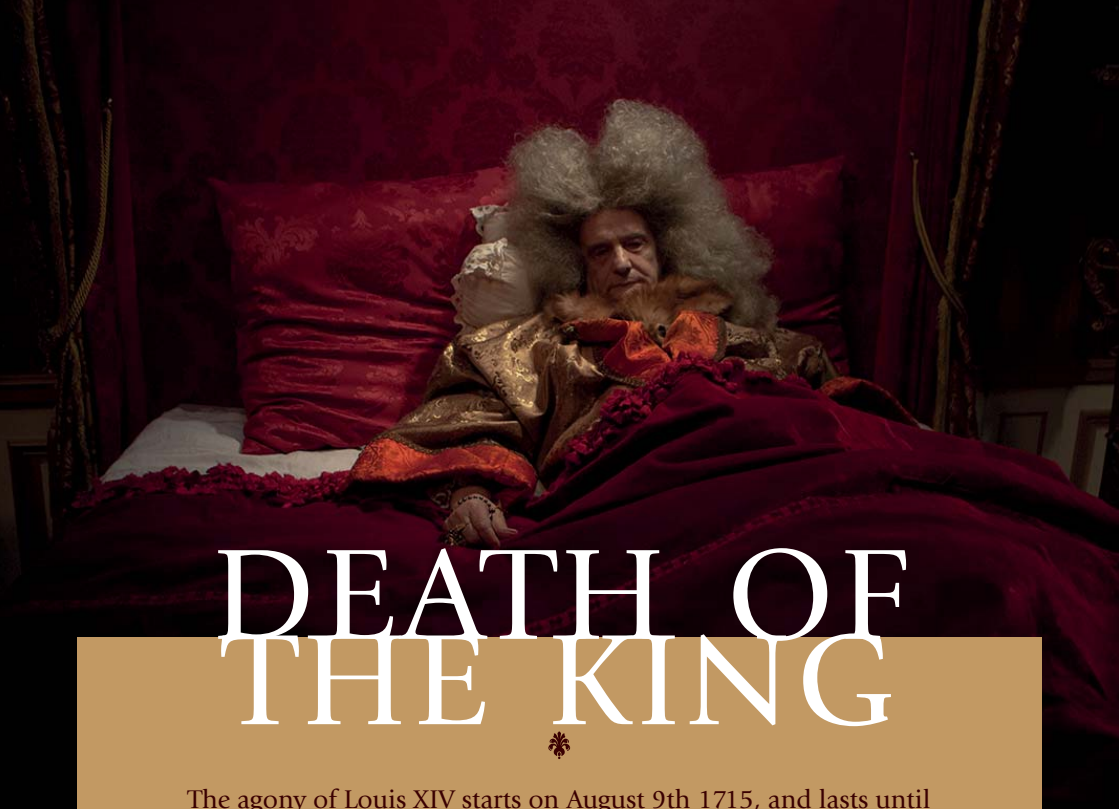
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AGENCE RÉGIONALE ECLA, ARTE COFINOVA 12, CINÉ+, KINO FILMES, RTP RÁDIO  
E TELEVISÃO PORTUGUESA AND TELEVISIÓ DE CATALUNYA

DISTRIBUTION: THE CINEMA GUILD



# DEATH OF THE KING

The agony of Louis XIV starts on August 9th 1715, and lasts until September 1st. It marks the end of a reign that lasted 72 years – the longest in French history. The official diary of the Health of the King, kept by successive doctors, reveals that Louis XIV had poor health and nearly died on numerous occasions: from syphilis at the age of five, from a fever at thirty-five, from a fistula at forty-five, and from diabetes with gangrenous complications at seventy. At the beginning of August 1715, Louis XIV suffers from an embolism in his leg due to cardiac arrhythmia.

## CHRONOLOGY

### August 9

The King comes back from hunting in Marly, and looks worn out. The next day, he complains about a pain in his left leg. His doctor Fagon diagnoses a sciatic and prescribes some camphoric spirit dressings and donkey milk baths. In the days that follow, the King keeps working despite the pain, but his nights are troubled. He barely eats anything and progressively loses his strength.

### August 16

During a reception, the King appears visibly exhausted before the public. He refuses to let the doctors stay in his room. The next day he seems to feel better: he grants an audience and then

works with his counselors. But when night comes, his fever doubles, and Fagon forbids the King to travel from Versailles to Paris. Word of the King's illness spreads through the Court, and some courtiers start breaking away from him to get closer to the future Regent, the Duke of Orleans.

### August 20

The health of Louis XIV suddenly worsens, but the Royal family conceals his illness from the public.

### August 21

The King accepts a collective consultation by four doctors from the Paris faculty of Medicine. They confirm the diagnosis of Fagon, despite the King's fever and ominous dark spots afflicting his leg. Frequent enemas produce no healthful effect.

### August 24

The first Surgeon of the King, Georges Mareschal, makes an incision in the leg and tells the King that he has gangrene, and that his leg must be amputated. The King refuses the amputation, and prepares for death by taking confession with Father Le Tellier.

### August 25

The 25th is the fete day of St Louis, and the King wants to keep face. He attends a concert and receives Madame de Maintenon and the Duke of Maine, who make the King sign a codicil granting the duke full control of the King's the civil and military possessions. The King then receives the Holy Viaticum and the Extreme Unction from the Chaplain General, Cardinal of Rohan, before letting the Court pay homages at his bedside.

### August 26

Louis XIV appoints the Maréchal de Villeroy as governor of his great-grandson, the Dauphin and future King, Louis XV, who receives his last recommendations: to control his taste for expensive buildings, to live in peace with his neighbors, and to try to ease the pains of his people.

### August 28

Quacks come selling snake oil and promise they can save the King. One called Brun, comes from Marseille and gives the King ten drops of a cure-all made of "the body of an animal". His remedy briefly seems to work, but by evening the gangrene has progressed and the King's health continues to fail.

### August 30 & 31

The King falls into coma. The gangrene has spread to the hip, and his legs have turned black.

### September 1

He dies at 8:15 A.M. Chaplains conduct the post-mortem, and by coach convey his remains to Notre-Dame Cathedral. According to his last wishes, his heart is given to the Jesuit director of the house on Saint Antoine street which holds the remains of Louis XIII. The rest of his body is embalmed for a public presentation, and on the 9th of September, he is buried in the Basilica of Saint-Denis.



# ALBERT SERRA



## BIOGRAPHY

Born in Banyoles in 1975, Albert Serra is a Catalan artist and director. Having studied philosophy and literature, he wrote plays and produced works on video. *Honor of the Knights*, a loose adaptation of Don Quixote featuring nonprofessional actors from his village, won international recognition. The film was presented at Cannes' Directors' Fortnight in 2006. A traditional Catalan Christmas song, *El cant dels ocells*, inspired his second film, *Birdsong*, the story of the Magi following their guiding star to Jesus in Bethlehem. In 2013, he received the Golden Leopard in Locarno for *Story of my Death*, based on Casanova's memoirs. *The Death of Louis XIV*, starring Jean-Pierre Léaud as the Sun King, is an Official Selection of the Cannes 2016 Film Festival.

## FILMOGRAPHY

The Death of Louis XIV (2016)  
CANNES FILM FESTIVAL, OFFICIAL SELECTION

Story of my Death (2013)  
LOCARNO FILM FESTIVAL, GOLDEN LEOPARD

Birdsong (2008)  
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT

Honor of the Knights (2006)  
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT

## INTERVIEW

**For your fourth film, you seize once again a famous historical figure.**

*The Death of Louis XIV* is a film set exclusively in the room of the King. Two weeks, in which courtiers, the clergy, and various ministers visit Louis XIV's bedside, are the film's subject and setting. It's really not about how France is going to survive the King's death. The film is about a man preparing for his own death, living through daily pain, despite being the King.

**What material did you work with to write the script?**

Two books, which are both literary and historical works: the *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon and those of the Marquis de Dangeau. Both were courtiers who marked the last days of Louis XIV. Part of what he said was reported verbatim, and the successive states of his illness are described in sordid detail.

**Here, the agony of the King is treated like a monotonous and repetitive spectacle. Why?**

Saint-Simon and Dangeau's texts have a precision and an exhaustiveness that tend toward saturation. Through their eyes, agony (even a King's agony) isn't a diversified and beautiful spectacle. Actually, it's not a spectacle at all. I didn't want to dramatize the texts I was working with. On the contrary, I chose to respect conscientiously their chronology, including their repetitions. I'm opposed to the idea of agony as it is usually showed in cinema, which is to say in a very dramatic and psychological way, meant to emphasize the very last word, the very last breath. Here, during these two weeks, pain reigns supreme, it inflates, every part of it is suffered in length. The film shows how death is lived, how the disease conquers new territories each day. The pain wins over the body and spirit, day after day, hour after hour.

**Does that mean you refuse to dramatize your cinema?**

That's not how I see things. For this project, what matters most are anecdotal things, not the story, which in itself is plain. I started from the dichotomy between death as it is dramatized by the King for others - the representation of his death - and as it is lived from inside. Showing the death of a King comes down to evoking a myth in its relation to the ordinary, the intimate. My approach consists of working on a legendary figure until I reach a flesh and bone subject. That's why I need to show the banality of the mythical, to show how History can hinge on something so small, so human. I force the spectator to reject his preconceived ideas related to the historical figure. He also has to get rid of the codes of dramaturgy, and the so-called true moments of an agony.

**Jean-Pierre Léaud is a myth himself. What did it mean for you to shoot this film with him today?**

Before, I had worked with non professional actors. Here, the starting point is the same: I have to like the people I work with. Their age doesn't matter. Jean-Pierre and I got along very quickly, the first time we met. We share an aesthetic and moral approach of life. I like his integrity, I really admire him. So everything happened very naturally, and at the same time I felt no pressure due to his incredible past work as an actor.

**How did your collaboration work?**

As with my previous films, with faith and a certain distance. We didn't rehearse together before shooting. I think Jean-Pierre was rehearsing alone in his house. The first time I saw him wearing his costume was the first day of shooting. From then on, every day was different. He came up with new ideas constantly, and I didn't want control, I wanted everybody to have fun.

**As opposed to your previous films, which you shot with people from your village, here you're working with both professional actors and total strangers that you cast on location.**

Yes, that's something I like to do. It makes things easier and more natural. It also brings a little heterogeneity to the film, and a certain sense of irony. Even if my conception of cinema is formalist, I don't take myself seriously. During the shooting, I forget everything and try to mix the opposites. It's like in dreams, the logic can't be the same as when you're awake. You have to be a troublemaker.





JEAN-PIERRE  
LEAUD



SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

**2015** : *LA MORT DE LOUIS XIV / THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV* — Albert SERRA

OFFICIAL SELECTION CANNES FILM FESTIVAL 2016

**2015** : *M* — Sara FORESTIER

**2011** : *CAMILLE REDOUBLE / CAMILLE REWINDS*  
Noémie LVOVSKY

**2010** : *LE HAVRE* — Aki KAURISMÄKI

**2008** : *VISAGE / FACE*— Tsai MING-LIANG

**2004** : *FOLLE EMBELLIE* — Dominique CABRERA

**2001** : *ET LA-BAS, QUELLE HEURE EST-IL ? / WHAT TIME IS IT THERE?* — Tsai MING-LIANG

**2001** : *LEAUD L'UNIQUE* — Serge Le PERON

**2000** : *LE PORNOGRAPHE / THE PORNOGRAPHER*  
Bertrand BONELLO

**1999** : *MARCORELLE N'EST PAS COUPABLE*  
Serge Le PERON

**1996** : *IRMA VEP* — Olivier ASSAYAS

**1996** : *POUR RIRE !* — Lucas BELVAUX

**1992** : *PARIS S'ÉVEILLE* — Olivier ASSAYAS  
PRIX DU MEILLEUR SCÉNARIO AU FESTIVAL DU CINÉMA EUROPÉEN

**1992** : *LA NAISSANCE DE L'AMOUR*  
Philippe GARREL

**1991** : *LA VIE DE BOHÈME* — Aki KAURISMAKI

**1990** : *J'AI ENGAGÉ UN TUEUR / I HIRED A KILLER*  
Aki KAURISMAKI

**1984** : *DÉTECTIVE / DETECTIVE* — Jean-Luc GODARD

**1982** : *REBELOTE* — Jacques RICHARD

**1978** : *L'AMOUR EN FUITE / LOVE ON THE RUN*  
François TRUFFAUT

**1973** : *LA MAMAN ET LA PUTAIN / THE MOTHER AND THE WHORE* — Jean EUSTACHE

**1973** : *LA NUIT AMÉRICAINE / DAY FOR NIGHT*  
François TRUFFAUT

**1971** : *LES DEUX ANGLAISES ET LE CONTINENT / TWO ENGLISH GIRLS* — François TRUFFAUT

**1970** : *DOMICILE CONJUGAL / BED AND BOARD*  
François TRUFFAUT

**1970** : *OUT ONE* — Jacques RIVETTE

**1969** : *PORCHERIE / IL PORCILE*  
Pier Paolo PASOLINI

**1969** : *LE LION À SEPT TÊTES / THE SEVEN HEADED LION* — Clauber ROCHA

**1968** : *LE GAI-SAVOIR / JOY OF LEARNING*  
Jean-Luc GODARD

**1968** : *BAISERS VOLÉS* — François TRUFFAUT  
PRIX LOUIS DELLUC / GRAND PRIX DU CINÉMA FRANÇAIS /  
PRIX DE L'ACADÉMIE DU CINÉMA 1969

**1967** : *LE DÉPART* — Jerzy SKOLIMOVSKI

**1967** : *LA CHINOISE* — Jean-Luc GODARD

**1967** : *WEEK-END* — Jean-Luc GODARD

**1966** : *MADE IN USA* — Jean-Luc GODARD

**1965** : *MASCULIN FÉMININ* — Jean-Luc GODARD  
OURS D'ARGENT INTERPRÉTATION MASCULINE AU FESTIVAL DE  
BERLIN 1966 / «MENTION SPÉCIALE» DU LONG MÉTRAGE AU  
FESTIVAL DE BERLIN 1966 / PRIX DE L'INTERFILM

**1965** : *LA CONCENTRATION* — Philippe GARREL

**1962** : *ANTOINE ET COLETTE / ANTOINE AND COLETTE* — François TRUFFAUT

**1961** : *L'AMOUR À VINGT ANS / LOVE AT TWENTY*  
François TRUFFAUT

**1960** : *LE TESTAMENT D'ORPHÉE / TESTAMENT OF ORPHEUS* — Jean COCTEAU

**1959** : *LES 400 COUPS / THE 400 BLOWS*  
François TRUFFAUT



# CASTING

## PATRICK D'ASSUMÇÃO - FAGON

Patrick d'Assumção is first and foremost an actor of theatre. His award nominated cinematic debut was in *Stranger from the Lake* (2013) by Alain Guiraudie. He appears with Anaïs Desmoustier and Félix Moati in Jérôme Bonnell's *All About Them* (2015), in *Diary of a Chambermaid* (2015) by Benoît Jacquot with Léa Seydoux and Vincent Lindon, then in *My Golden Days* (2015) by Arnaud Desplechin, presented at Cannes' Directors Fortnight, and *The Very Private Life of Mister Sim* (2015) with Jean-Pierre Bacri and Mathieu Amalric.

## MARC SUSINI - BLOUIN

Marc Susini is a French theater actor, who performed in productions by Stéphane Braunschweig, Christophe Rauck, Eric Vigner and Catherine Marnas, and in plays written by Brecht, Marivaux, Gogol and Bernard-Marie Koltès. He's now playing in Hörvath's *Figaro Gets a Divorce* produced by Christophe Rauck. He's acted in films by Pierre Salvadori, Jean-Claude Biette, Vijay Singh, Thomas Lilti, Eric Zonca and Claire Devers.

## IRENE SILVAGNI - MADAME DE MAINTENON

Born in Cannes from Russian emigrants, Irène Silvagni has long been the wife of Giorgio Silvagni, the French producer and director who worked in association with Jacques Perrin. Irène started working for Mademoiselle and soon became editor in chief of ELLE. Then she joined Vogue, first in New York and then in Paris as the director in chief of the European edition, before being appointed editor in chief of French Fashion and Beauty section. For the last 25 years she's been working with the Japanese creator Yohji Yamamoto.

## BERNARD BELIN - GEORGES MARESCHAL

An ex-actor of *Comédie Française*, Bernard Belin was trained at the age of 14 at Cours Simon before joining the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts of Paris. Discovered by Jean le Poulais, Belin performed with the *Comédie Française* from 1984 to 1991, and he works with producers such as Antoine Vitez, Jean-Luc Boutté and Jacques Seyres. In 2012, he created his own theatre company and has since produced two acclaimed adaptations of Racine's *Phèdre* and of Cocteau's *The Human Voice*. He's acted in films by Georges Lautner, Serge Moati, Hervé Baslé and others.

## JACQUES HENRIC - LE TELLIER

Jacques Henric is a French author and teacher. For many years, he has published in the communist French press, in particular *Les Lettres françaises* under the direction of Aragon. Philippe Sollers published his first texts in the literary review he directed at the Seuil editions, as well as his first novels. His following novels and essays were published by Grasset, Denoël, Stock and then Seuil again, in the "Fiction & Cie." Collection. Since 1972, Jacques Henric is also part of Art Press' publishing committee along with his wife Catherine Millet.

## OLIVIER CADIOT - DOCTOR

Olivier Cadiot is a French writer and playwright. His first works were published by P.O.L.; then he wrote plays for Ludovic Lagarde, opera librettos for Pascal Dusapin, and various translations. He regularly gives public readings of his own texts, in particular at Théâtre de la Colline. In 1993, he founded with Pierre Alféri the *Revue de littérature générale*. He has recorded three albums with the guitarist and singer Rodolphe Burger. In 2010, he was appointed as an associated artist of the Avignon arts festival, along with Christoph Marthaler.

