

“The Cinema is a wonderful place.” In conversation with Austrian director Daniel Geronimo Prochaska

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What’s the last movie you saw at the cinema?

Well, we recently had a thrilling movie-night out with “Das schaurige Haus” (The scary house) by talented Austrian director Daniel Geronimo Prochaska. “A dream came true” is how he terms his first feature movie, that has already received a lot of praise for being technically really well done as well as receiving the rating ‘particularly valuable’ by the German film and media assessment (FBW). We had the pleasure to question Daniel about how he got hands on the script, the immediate feeling of knowing when someone is right for a part and finding his own style of directing.

You have just released your first feature movie called “Das schaurige Haus” (The scary house). We watched it yesterday and it was so great – we loved it! Can you sum up how you feel about the release?

For me it is an unbelievable feeling, almost surreal that my first cinema film is currently showing in Austria’s cinemas. A dream came true!

The film script of Marcel Kawentel und Timo Lombeck is based on the same-named novel of Martina Wildner (2011). How did you get your hands on the script – were you contacted by them directly?

I was just finishing my first TV film that Monafilm produced. Gerald Podgornig, the producer of Monafilm, pushed the script for the Creepy House into my hands. After reading the script, I knew I wanted to do this film.

I read that initially the plan was to shoot the film in Germany. At the end you shot in Austria, mainly in Carinthia (where we are from btw) and some parts in Vienna. How come?

The reason why we shoot the film in Carinthia, was to show the bigger Culture Clash. The Family moved from Germany to Austria. We thought the height of fall is greater there! And we all are totally in love with Carinthia. My girlfriend is born there by the way. *(laughs)*

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The movie was shot in 34 days – is there a lot of time pressure while filming to get it all done in that time?

Yes, but if you shoot a movie with young actors, there is always time pressure. You can't shoot as long as with adult actors. So we had 35 days of shooting and the young actors were really great and did a good job! If you don't have the financial means like Hollywood Movies has, you just have to be more creative and think about how to create horror with simpler means.

How were the actors casted? And how difficult is it actually to find the right cast? Do you get this immediate feeling that someone is right for the part?

We had great support from our Casting Agent Nicole Schmied. She casted for weeks and found great young actors. And yes, I actually had the feeling when I saw the main cast, that all of my actors fit perfectly for our movie.

On Wikipedia it says that the movie is technically really well done. We totally agree with that. Would you say that understanding about the handicraft is the most important ingredient when it comes to being a successful director? Or what other qualities does a good director need to have?

I think these qualities are important to be a good director. Telling stories passionately, never stop dreaming and be patient. It's good for me that I've been editing films for 10 years, that gives me a certain security. But the most important are characters. Characters, Characters!

Your father is a famous director as well – has it been difficult for you not to compare yourself to him and do your own thing, find your own creative way?

Of course it has not always been easy for me, and I thought about it for a long time whether I should dare to take the step towards directing. I grew up with very different films than my father. So I found my own style. But of course I learned almost everything from my father and we have a great relationship. We exchange ideas very often. I am very proud that my father is my father.

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In 2018 you had your debut with the TV movie “Geschenkt” and you are currently filming a courtroom drama for the RTL streaming service TVnow, “Glauben” based on a script of Ferdinand von Schirach. What are the main differences for a director when doing a TV movie or feature movie?

If you are working on a movie, you have more time for preparation and more time for shooting. The daily workload for a series is very high. I think that's the big difference.

It is a difficult time right now for cinemas due to the Corona crisis and streaming. What do you think the future holds for the cinema?

It's very, very difficult right now for the entire cultural industry. I hope the cinemas will survive this crisis. The Cinema is a wonderful place. You sit together with all sorts of people in a hall and you laugh, cry and feverish together; you only experience that in the cinema. It is a unique experience. Streaming never replaces the feeling and experience what cinema creates. I hope we can get through this crisis well. And we fight for it together and not against each other.

What's next for you?

I'm currently working with the writers from The Creepy House on a Si Fi Vampire Movie. And there are a few other stretching projects. But I can't say anything more right now.
(laughs)

Favourite movie?

I have a few favorite films: Roma, Taxi Driver, Apocalypse now, Lost in Translation, The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou but one of my all time favorites is "The Graduate".

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Favourite season?

Black Mirror

Music you currently love?

The new record from the Strokes

Do you have a motto for life?

Be kind, be grateful, enjoy every day and stay a dreamer.

If you wouldn't work in the film industry, you would...

...be a guitarist in a rock band *(laughs)*.
(Daniel also makes music. You can have a listen here on youtube or Spotify.)

Thanks so much for your time.