

CANNES 2007 – CRITICS' WEEK
CAMÉRA D'OR CONTENDER

GUILLERMO DEL TORO
PRESENTS

THE ORPHANAGE

(EL ORFANATO)

A FILM BY
JUAN ANTONIO BAYONA

WITH
BELÉN RUEDA
FERNANDO CAYO
ROGER PRÍNCIP
MABEL RIBERA
MONTSERRAT CARULLA
ANDRÉS GERTRÚDIX
EDGAR VIVAR

SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE
GERALDINE CHAPLIN

A RODAR Y RODAR / TELECINCO CINEMA PRODUCTION

IN COLLABORATION WITH
WARNER BROS PICTURES ESPAÑA

IN COLLABORATION WITH
TELECINCO / WILD BUNCH / ASTURIAS PARAÍSO NATURAL / TELEVISIÓ DE CATALUNYA

SPAIN 2007 - RUNNING TIME: 1H40

OFFICIAL SCREENING
SUNDAY MAY 20TH – 20:00 - ESPACE MIRAMAR
JUAN ANTONIO BAYONA, BELÉN RUEDA, GERALDINE CHAPLIN, GUILLERMO DEL TORO
WILL BE IN CANNES FROM MAY 19TH TO MAY 22ND



SYNOPSIS

Laura spent the happiest years of her childhood growing up in an orphanage by the seaside, cared for by the staff and fellow orphans whom she loved as brothers and sisters.

Now, thirty years later, she returns with her husband Carlos and Simon, their 7-year-old son, with a dream of restoring and reopening the long-abandoned orphanage as a home for disabled children. The new home and mysterious surroundings awaken Simon's imagination and the boy starts to spin a web of fantastic tales and not-so-innocent games...

A troubling web that begins to disturb Laura, drawing her into the child's strange universe which resonates with echoes of long-forgotten, deeply unsettling memories of her own childhood.

As the opening day draws near, tension builds within the family. Carlos remains sceptical, believing that Simon is making everything up in a desperate bid for attention. But Laura slowly becomes convinced that something long-hidden and terrible is lurking in the old house, something waiting to emerge and inflict appalling damage on her family.





GUILLERMO DEL TORO ON THE ORPHANAGE

For many years I have followed the work of J.A. Bayona, director of the shorts *My Holidays* and *The Sponge Man*, and an infinite number of delirious music videos I admire. His talent was crying out to direct a feature-length film, so producing *The Orphanage* was nothing more than a response to this need. Having seen the film, I'm convinced the effort was worthwhile. During my long career in the film industry, I have received many, many screenplays, not least because of my longstanding interest in the work of new directors. And many directors have asked for my opinion and advice on their work. Alas, it is only very rarely that one comes across a great script. A screenplay may show glimmers of talent, but it almost never cries out to be transformed into a film. However, when I read *The Orphanage*, I knew immediately that I was dealing with an exception.

The screenplay by Sergio G. Sánchez was the best I had read in many years. Just a few pages in, I realised that this wasn't simply another snazzy rehash of the stock elements of the genre: haunted houses, ghosts, parallel universes... This script possessed a truly rare depth.

The Orphanage is more than just a horror movie: its pacing is impeccable, its visuals extraordinary, it doesn't rely on special effects to make the viewer squirm, and it offers a very personal interpretation of the classic locations and conventions of the genre. *The Orphanage* also has unusual emotional depth for a film of this nature. Apart from being a truly disturbing account of supernatural phenomena, it is one of the best crafted, most beautiful stories about the profound pain caused by loss that I have seen. Bayona has not just created a story packed with mystery and suspense: he has also crafted a powerful melodrama by sculpting his characters, as well as the ties that bind them, with such care and precision.

Bayona has done full credit to Sánchez's screenplay, whilst showing himself to be a master of audiovisual language with a unique personality. What's more, he has managed to conjure truly memorable performances from his actors, particularly Belén Rueda who glows in a role overflowing with courage and insight. But perhaps most important of all, Bayona has obviously enjoyed his work as much as I have.

ABOUT THE SCRIPT

Although the first version of Sánchez's script was written in 2000, it was not until 2004 that *The Orphanage* reached J.A. Bayona, who agreed to direct it. Almost immediately, the project was selected by the Sundance Institute's Script Lab.

Sánchez and Bayona spent over a year rewriting the story. Bayona recalls: "It was a great script in essence, but I needed to adapt the story to my taste. I wanted to make it something personal."

The Orphanage has a lot in common with a type of fantasy cinema rarely seen today. It is about the terror that springs from everyday elements, elements that get gradually contaminated until they open the door to madness. The horror depicted in *The Orphanage* does not come from outside, or from a psychopath's twisted mind, nor is it the result of the main characters wandering into some forbidden terrain. It is a horror born in idyllic surroundings, in the heart of the perfect family. And it grows unexpectedly, threatening to destroy them completely.

For Bayona: "*The Orphanage* essentially addresses the fear of separation. The characters in this film all live with the trauma of a separation in their past, or with the threat of an imminent separation. And that fear manifests as something alive and present in their environment, turning their dream of the idyllic happy home into the most devastating nightmare."

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Bringing *The Orphanage* to the screen as Bayona envisaged it doubled the original budget and shooting time. Then Guillermo del Toro appeared on the scene. "I met Guillermo fourteen years ago, when he came to present *Cronos* at the Fantasy Film Festival in Sitges. As soon as he found out about our project, he offered to co-produce the film. Everything got much simpler after that," states Bayona. Backed by It's Alive! New Talent Lab, production company Rodar y Rodar gave the director free rein to work with his regular team for commercials and music videos.

Shooting began on May 15 2006 in Llanes, Asturias. The crew chose this location because of its great variety of spectacular natural settings: mysterious grottos, towering cliffs, long stretches of unspoiled coast, forests, mountains and even a village centre where they had to simulate a big Christmas snow storm in the middle of August. Llanes also provided the production team with its most important location: Partarríu Mansion, the house that serves as the old orphanage.

"I wasn't looking for a huge mansion, filled with interminable hallways, like in *The Shining*," Bayona states. "I wanted something smaller and more minimal, but at the same time large enough to make the story credible. Partarríu Mansion had all these elements. It was a large colonial house dating back to the end of the 19th century, with a truly mysterious feel to it. Its dimensions are deceptive at first sight: the fact that each of its facades is different gives the impression that the house is constantly changing."



However, the director's plans, full of intricate camera movements, called for the interiors of the house to be completely reconstructed. Bayona: "My head was swimming from images of old horror movies like Jack Clayton's *The Innocents* and Robert Wise's *The Haunting*, so this had to be done in the classic way: in a studio. Our approach was very ambitious. Everything had to be prepared in great detail and with great precision, and you can only achieve that on a set."

To achieve this precision, the entire film was visualized in advance. Thousands of sketches, storyboards and conceptual designs were drawn up before the shoot. The whole set was reproduced in a three-dimensional graphic in which the DP could position the camera before going on set. After four weeks in Llanes, the team moved to Barcelona to finish the ten-week shoot.



INTERVIEW J.A. BAYONA – DIRECTOR

Was it important that your first film had to be a horror movie ?

It was the range of possibilities that the screenplay for *The Orphanage* offered that made me want to direct the film. The project has to attract me over and above the genre it belongs to. Though it is true that horror serves as a great school. You're allowed to manipulate time and space any way you like, to use certain camera moves to obtain an immediate effect. That gives you a certain sense of security. But what makes the film come alive are the things that go beyond the constraints of genre: what lies beneath, the truth of the performances, the degree of your involvement with what you are narrating...

Should a first film function as an 'artistic manifesto' ?

I believe a film must be a manifesto of the filmmaker you are at the time you make it. I don't know where I'm headed as filmmaker. I think plotting some kind of plan would be too rational. I believe filmmaking should be something from the guts, something very emotional.

How did you rework the script with Sergio Sánchez ?

This was the most complicated part. The first draft was written almost ten years ago. When I became involved I needed to make the text my own so we re-worked the script from scratch. My first question was: why does Laura return to the house where she grew up ? That was the key to everything else. *The Orphanage* became a journey into the past, a regression, a psychological portrait of someone who clings to the past because she can't face the present, and who finally finds an escape through her fantasies.

Other than that, the big challenge was to maintain a certain ambiguity. You can read the film in a realist way, not as a ghost story but as the portrait of a woman who loses her mind. Keeping this ambiguity became our main limitation and what finally made the work really exciting.

The shorts you directed show a strong American influences, whereas *The Orphanage* is openly 'European' in its style.

Was this a deliberate decision ?

Both in my short films and in *The Orphanage* there's a deliberate clash between the real world and a more 'Hollywood' reality. I take pleasure in watching myself as the protagonist of this conflict, fighting against that Hollywood style and against the weight of the films I watched as a kid that served as a reference. For me, the key lies in how you integrate these references. Carlos, Laura's husband, accuses her of making a movie in her head. I don't know if *The Orphanage* is more or less European in style, but what is deliberate is the effort I made not to have it look like

the horror films being made today. The film resembles the movies I saw as a kid. In fact, *The Orphanage* is my own regression to the movies of my childhood.

Could you talk a bit about certain references: *Suspiria*, *La Residencia*, *The Spirit of the Beehive*, *The Innocents*, *Les Disparus de Saint-Agil*, or, more recently, *The Devil's Backbone* or *Saint Ange* by Pascal Laugier, who seems to share a lot of obsessions and references with *The Orphanage*.

I haven't seen either *Saint Ange* or *Les Disparus de Saint-Agil*. It's true that we discussed those other films during preparation. There are certain scenes where I treat colour very much as Argento used to. I also showed *La Residencia* and *The Innocents* to my DP, asking him to pay special attention to the Scope lensing in both films. However, the films that were most influential were Polanski's *The Tenant* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, in both formal and



a narrative terms. Laura starts on a journey similar to Richard Dreyfuss' character in "*Close Encounters...*". And I admire the way Polanski introduces the absurd in everyday detail, as well as his use of space, the lensing and the visual narrative.

Did you discuss all these references with your producer Guillermo Del Toro, and how you intended to transcend them and turn them into something utterly personal ?

Not at great length. We were aware of them of course but we didn't give them undue importance. We focused on the story, on how Laura loses everything until only her fantasy remains. This is something that links *The Orphanage* to *Pan's Labyrinth*; Guillermo and I were entirely on the same wavelength.

Did you yourself find it difficult to leave your childhood behind ?

The clash between the adult world and childhood was already a theme in my short films. Truffaut said, childhood is something everyone is entitled to talk about knowledgeably. That goes even for the young directors of our generation who are often accused of having nothing to say.

As a director, who do you identify the most with, the child or the mother ?

Both. The mother sets out on a journey that ends up transforming her into a child. It's Simon who plays with his invisible friends during the first half hour, but it's Laura who makes contact at the end of the film. We even see her wearing a childish school dress. I enriched Simon's character with details of my own childhood. And Belén helped me give depth to her character. She has experienced motherhood - unlike me - and so possesses the knowledge necessary to embody the tragedy of her character.

How did you conceive the seance with Geraldine Chaplin ?

It was a challenge to shoot that scene without betraying the ambiguity that we sought. The séance was the film's centrepiece, it had to be spectacular without recourse to a single special effect. Finally it was a question of point of view and very careful sound work.

Simon is an adopted child. How does this deepen the themes of guilt, loss and motherhood in the film ?

Of course the issues of motherhood and responsibility are highlighted if Simon is adopted. It also gives us an insight into the life of this couple, Laura and Carlos, and their need to protect other vulnerable children. There's also the clear parallel between Laura and Peter Pan's Wendy. Wendy fantasizes about being the lost boys' mother and spending her life reading bedtime stories to them.

Deformity, handicap and illness permeate the film. Can you explain why ?

Horror movies are all about transgression. The horror movie must take us to places we're afraid to go, must show us things about ourselves that we find disturbing. Deformity, handicap and illness threaten our stability. You have to rupture that stability, to reverse it. That's real terror. Which world is worse, the real one or the one imagined by Laura ? On the other hand, illness provokes thoughts of mortality, of death. This is something Laura must learn to cope with.

Why did you decide to evoke crematoria ? Is there a conscious political dimension in your film ?

I hadn't thought of that. It's not a crematorium we see in the film, it's a coal storage room. An oven or a boiler would never have a wooden door.

How do you explain the international success of Spanish and Asian horror films, when American horror films are exactly their opposite: full of gore, torture and special effects ?

In Hollywood, production design has become as important as big stars. Executives abuse special effects, sound and music to hypnotize their audiences. It's their strategy for disguising the lack of good scripts. This isn't the audience's fault. Recent films like *The Sixth Sense*, *The Blair Witch Project* or *The Others* have proved their commercial potential without resorting to superfluous visual effects.

Also, television has abandoned all reticence when it comes to showing explicit violence. Live car chases, plastic surgery operations are broadcast every day... it's inevitable that movies follow the same trend.

Do you feel part of a 'new wave' of Spanish directors ?

In Spain we are beginning to have the tools to compete with international movies. I'm not talking just about the technical aspects. I went to a film school, something impossible for filmmakers older than me in Spain, where all film schools had vanished. *The Orphanage* isn't just my first feature, it's also a first time for the screenwriter, the DP, the editor, the composer... I don't know if we're part of a new wave but what I do know is that we wouldn't be here without those who came before us.





BELÉN RUEDA

Belén Rueda was always J.A. Bayona's first choice to play Laura. For the director: *"I needed a very versatile actress. Belén can appear very vulnerable and at the same time she derives great strength from within which makes her powerful. She reminds me the heroines in James Cameron's films. She is also a great mother, which was very helpful for us when preparing the character together"*.

Playing Laura was a challenge for Belén Rueda. Not only was it her first lead film role, but the genre was an unexplored field for her. The actress remembers the way the story captivated her from the first moment: *"There was nobody at home and I was really frightened while I was reading the script, but I couldn't stop until I finished. The story is captivating and constantly surprises you. Every three or four scenes it disturbs you, it is puzzling and forces you to rethink the whole story until you reach an end without concessions"*. Rueda states: *"My first impressions after reading a script are essential for me. When I finished The Orphanage I knew I had to make this film"*.

Belén Rueda gave herself entirely to the film, both physically and emotionally. *"She lost more than eight kilos during the shoot and never minded not looking her best,"* declares Bayona, who is extremely satisfied with the work of the actress. This applies to both the director and the crew, as Bayona recalls: *"The entire crew applauded spontaneously at the end of certain takes. It was very touching. Belén has a lot in common with the character of Laura. She was very brave to accept the role and I am eternally grateful"*.

BELÉN RUEDA *selected filmography*

- 2007. SAVAGE GRACE - Tom Kallin (forthcoming)
- 2007. THE ORPHANAGE (EL ORFANATO) - J.A. Bayona
- 2004. THE SEA INSIDE (MAR ADENTRO) - Alejandro Amenábar



GERALDINE CHAPLIN

Daughter of Charles Chaplin, **Geraldine Chaplin** was discovered by David Lean when she was dancing in Paris, what led to her role in *Doctor Zhivago*. Since then, this outstanding actress has worked with the most important filmmakers: Robert Altman, Carlos Saura, Franco Zeffirelli, Richard Attenborough...

GERALDINE CHAPLIN

recent filmography

- 2007. THE ORPHANAGE (EL ORFANATO) - J.A. Bayona
- 2004. THE SEA INSIDE (MAR ADENTRO) - Alejandro Amenábar
- 2007. THE TOTTENWACKERS - Ibón Cormenzana
- 2007. MIGUEL & WILLIAM - Inés Paris
- 2007. THERESA, THE BODY OF CHRIST - Ray Loriga
- 2005. MELISSA P. - Luca Guadagnino
- 2005. OCULTO - Antonio Hernandez
- 2005. HEIDI - Paul Marcus
- 2004. THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY - Mary McGuckian
- 2002. TALK TO HER - Pedro Almodóvar
- 2002. THE CITY OF NO LIMITS - Antonio Hernández
- GOYA AWARD BEST ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE
- 2001. JUST RUN! - Saura Medrano
- 1995. HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS - Jodie Foster
- 1996. JANE EYRE - Franco Zeffirelli
- 1994. WORDS UPON THE WINDOW PANE - Mary McGukian
- 1993. THE AGE OF INNOCENCE - Martin Scorsese
- 1992. CHAPLIN - Richard Attenborough
- NOMINEE GOLDEN GLOBE BEST ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

RODAR GROUP

Headed up by Joaquín Padró and Mar Targarona, the RODAR GROUP operates in different areas of the audiovisual market.

RODAR AND RODAR ADVERTISING has reaped more than 140 awards for its work, at some of the most prestigious advertising festivals in the world. Among these awards is the only Grand Prix of Cannes that has been given to a Spanish producer.

RODAR AND RODAR CINEMA AND TELEVISION has produced “VIVANCOS 3”, one of the most widely-viewed Spanish films in 2002, and has recently brought out “ENTRE VIVIR Y SOÑAR” (“*Between Life and Dreams*”).

It has inaugurated its new seal “IT’S ALIVE! NEW TALENTS LAB” with Guillem Morales’ “EL HABITANTE INCIERTO” (“*The Unsure Inhabitant*”). The film received great acclaim at the Sitges Festival, where it was awarded Best Actress Prize (Mónica López), and given a Goya nomination for Best New Director.

RODAR GROUP FILMOGRAPHY

- 1993. MUERE MI VIDA [“My Life Dies”]. Directed by Mar Targarona.
- 2002. VIVANCOS 3. Directed by Albert Saguer.
- 2004. ENTRE VIVIR Y SOÑAR [“Between Life and Dreams”]. Directed by Alfonso Albacete and David Menkes.
- 2004. EL HABITANTE INCIERTO [“The Unsure Inhabitant”]. Directed by Guillem Morales.
- 2007. El Orfanato [“The Orphanage”]. Directed by J.A. Bayona.
- 2007. NO ME PIDAS QUE TE BESE, PORQUÉ TE BESARÉ [“Don’t Ask Me to Kiss You Because I Will”]. Directed by Albert Espinosa (*in pre-production*).

TELECINCO CINEMA

TELECINCO, through its cine production arm TELE CINCO CINEMA, has resolutely supported the Spanish film industry over the last years.

As a result of this commitment, TELE CINCO CINEMA has co-produced some of the most significant titles in recent Spanish film. From *El Otro Lado de la Cama* and *Días de Fútbol*, to *Los dos Lados de la Cama*.

This commitment to domestic film production includes the acquisition of broadcast rights to such recent movies as *Darkness*, from Jaume Balagueró, or *La Gran Aventura Mortadelo y Filemón*, from Javier Fesser.

Amongst TELE CINCO CINEMA’s most recent productions are *Kovak Box* from Daniel Monzón, *Días de cine* from David Serrano and, specially, *Alatriste* from Agustín Díaz Yanes and *Pan’s Labyrinth* from Guillermo del Toro.

Amongst the projects that are being developed there can be stressed: *Ladrones* from Jaime Marques, *Salir pitando* from Álvaro Fernández Armero and *The Oxford Murders* from Álex de la Iglesia.





CAST

LAURA
CARLOS
SIMÓN
PILAR
BENIGNA
ENRIQUE
BALABÁN
AURORA

BELÉN RUEDA
FERNANDO CAYO
ROGER PRÍNCIP
MABEL RIBERA
MONTSERRAT CARULLA
ANDRÉS GERTRUDIX
EDGAR VIVAR
GERALDINE CHAPLIN

CREW

DIRECTOR
SCREENPLAY
FIRST ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR
PRODUCER
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS - RODAR Y RODAR

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS - TELECINCO CINEMA
DELEGATE PRODUCERS

PRODUCTION MANAGER
MUSIC
DP
EDIT
SOUND
SOUND DESIGN
SOUND MIX
SFX MAKE UP
SFX
ART DIRECTOR
COSTUME
MAKE UP
HAIR

JUAN ANTONIO BAYONA
SERGIO G. SÁNCHEZ
MENNA FITTÉ
GUILLERMO DEL TORO
MAR TARGARONA
JOAQUÍN PADRÓ
ÁLVARO AUGUSTIN
BELÉN ATIENZA
ELENA MANRIQUE
SANDRA HERMIDA
FERNANDO VELÁZQUEZ
ÓSCAR FAURA
ELENA RUIZ
XAVIER MAS
ORIO TARRAGO
MARC ORTS
DDT
JORDI SANT AGUSTI (INFANIA)
JOSEP ROSELL
MARÍA REYES
LOLA LÓPEZ
ITZIAR ARRIETA



