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'Antigone' - a resounding Greek tragedy transposed to modern day Canada

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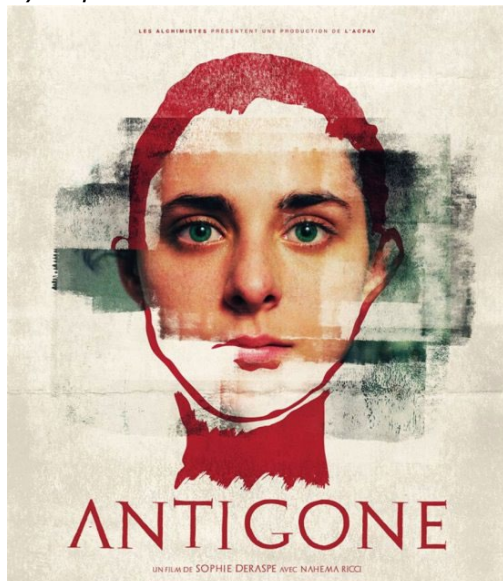


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In 441 B.C. Sophocles wrote and produced with great success the play "Antigone," based on the myth of Oedipus' daughter who defied authorities to honor her outlawed dead brother, risking her life in doing so. This version, blending in with today's social reality, set in modern day French speaking Montreal, asks the same question the myth did: when a judicial system makes a decision that seems unfair, should one comply in order to fit in, or on the contrary, rise up and continue to defend one's deeper inner truth, no matter the consequences?

The movie "Antigone," which was Canada's Oscar submission this year, tells the story of a teenage Kabyle immigrant, who after the killing of her parents immigrates and is raised in Québec by her grandmother with her sister and two brothers. During a violent confrontation with the police, the older brother is killed and the younger one finds himself accused of violence against the police and condemned to be extradited to Algeria. Antigone, the youngest of the four siblings, is determined not to let her already devastated family be ripped apart once again.

The movie by creative Canadian director Sophie Deraspe is incredibly intense and romantic. It gives the portrait of a true contemporary heroine whose purity and

strength clashes against a judicial system she is not prepared to confront. Antigone is a brilliant student, she is ambitious and unafraid. She lost her parents at age 3 during the Algerian civil war, and now her whole sense of belonging and of self is wrapped around an unwavering commitment to her family, whether some members deserve it or not.

In the amazing deep and bright gaze of young actress Nahéma Ricci burns the fire of passionate youth that can start revolutions, invent new forms of art or change history's trajectory. This is a story as old as humanity, when somebody too righteous to play by unjust rules has to be broken by society that demands some level of conformity. The spectator is in turn drawn to the beauty of Antigone's soul or her confounding courage, and somewhat taken aback by the sharpness of her intransigence.

Deraspe explained clearly her motivation in an interview with The Montreal Gazette: "I read 'Antigone' when I was in my early 20s," she said. "I immediately had a connection with the character. I felt it was so uplifting, even if it was a tragedy, to read such a strong character, a young woman with such dignity. And to think that a man wrote it more than 2,000 years ago - it felt good to know it was possible for such a character to exist and to endure throughout history."

The movie will enthrall viewers because of the dramatic powerful themes it develops, but also because of the director's innovative technical mastery. The form of the movie itself sets the confrontation between the adolescent's fire and the adult's academism by inserting short scenes that break the normal movie rhythm and imaging: SMS and graphic superimpositions take over the screen, the film editing becomes jerky, and for a little while, the movie looks like a TikTok production.? Deraspe explained in another interview that, for her, social media plays the role that the chorus used to play in the classic Greek tragedy, explaining and commenting the feelings aroused in the spectators by the protagonists. "Social media is nowadays society's murmur," she said.

The powerful and emotional performance by Ricci as Antigone will also fascinate viewers. She is in turn a shy 17-year-old making a presentation in class, a young woman in love, and a true dramatic classic heroine and role model for the youth around her. Antigone's sister Ismene is an interesting contrasting character as her aspiration is not heroism but just a normal and banal life.

"Antigone" is not to be missed when it is presented by the local nonprofit International Film Showcase at the Orinda Theater, opening on Aug. 20 for at least one full week; three screenings each day.? Limited seating. Tickets: www.OrindaMovies.com

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[back](#)

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