



# Coppelia

A film by
Jeff Tudor,
Steven De Beul,
Ben Tesseur

Based on tales by **E.T.A. Hoffmann** 

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### Technical info

Live Action & Animation
Netherlands, Germany, Belgium
2021 ♦ 82 min ♦ No dialogue
Color ♦ Image 1.85:1 ♦ Sound 5.1 Surround







# Logline

When everyone in town falls under the spell of - the 'perfect' robot-woman the Doctor has created. charismatic cosmetic surgeon Doctor Coppelius, A modern tale for young and old, told through feisty Swan must act to save her sweetheart Franz, a unique combination of 2D and 3D animation and before his heart is used to spark life into Coppelia live action dance.

# Synopsis

cosmetic surgeon, whose lure of superficial beauty poisons culture – it's never been more important to be yourself.

Innovative family feature Coppelia combines enchanting the town. Swan (DePrince) must uncover the truth about the animation and live action dance in a modern retelling of the love popular newcomer who puts her community and the life of story between Swan and Franz, jeopardised by Dr. Coppelius her beloved Franz (Daniel Camargo) in danger. Modern and and his uncannily beautiful protégée Coppelia. With a diverse fast paced, the dialogue-free film features a blend of musical and world-class cast including Michaela DePrince, Daniel influences from classical to electronic, bringing the story to Camargo, Vito Mazzeo and Dame Darcey Bussell, DBE, the life like never before. As the townspeople come to learn, in unconventional adaptation sees Dr. Coppelius (Mazzeo) as a the age of social media and an increasingly image conscious









Swan is a confident, independent young woman. She lives with her mother in a small, friendly town. Swan runs her own juice bar, has a great group of friends and - although she won't admit it to herself, or to anyone else, just yet - she is falling for Franz.

# Interview with Michaela DePrince

### What do you hope audiences will get How was it working with the production from Coppelia?

I hope audiences of all ages will be It was a great experience. I was challenged inspired. We all struggle to find ways to fit the norm, or what people say the norm is, when being different and unique is much more special than trying to be what others want vou to be.

### How is this production of Coppelia subverting some of the stereotypes about ballet and making it more accessible for modern audiences?

This version of Coppelia is very modern, which I hope audiences will find relatable.

### What are some of the key themes of the story you're hoping to bring across?

Standing up for what you believe in. Protecting others from feeling that they aren't good enough, and of course love and acceptance.

### What do you love most about dance as a medium for storytelling?

It is the best way for me to express myself. Especially with this production, you understand what the story is about by just one small look and I think that's beautiful.

### team to make this film?

in ways I've never been challenged before, but in a really positive way. I grew quite a lot in the process of making this film due to all the support I had from the production team.



### Franz

Franz is the popular guy who runs the bicycle repair shop in front of the juice bar. Although he is constantly surrounded by adoring girls, he secretly loves Swan but is too shy to admit it... His loving heart is why Doctor Coppelius decides to capture him in his clinic.

# Interview with Daniel Camargo



### What do you hope audiences will get from Coppelia?

I hope they will have fun watching it! I think the great thing about Coppelia the movie, is that it's universal - there's no dialogue, and the story is easy to understand. So audiences of all ages, from all over the world, will be able to watch and enjoy the film.

### How is this production of Coppelia subverting some of the stereotypes about ballet and making it more accessible for modern audiences?

It's a very updated and relevant version of Coppelia, so it will allow audiences to see and understand the story through a new lens.

What are the stereotypes about ballet? If you've never seen ballet before, I'm sure you'll enjoy this. It's great fun, and the dance is really used to drive the story along. It's just like a musical, but with dance instead of songs! It's a very easy style. You don't have to know anything about ballet to enjoy the film.

### What are some of the key themes of the story you're hoping to bring across?

Anyone can enjoy and express themselves through dance, without any

### restrictions, be it color, sexual orientation or background. That's not a part of the story, but this naturally comes across through the film! The key theme is 'Be yourself'. Be confident

have to change yourself to suit someone else's idea of what is beautiful. Oh, and it's also a nice love story! Which everyone enjoys.

and happy being who you are, you don't

### Why do you think the story of Coppelia is still relevant today?

This telling of Coppelia brings a number of contemporary issues to the forefront.

Young people today are facing a lot of pressure, especially on social media, to look a certain way. More and more young people want to have cosmetic surgery. It's important we remind young people, it's OK to be yourself, you shouldn't feel any pressure.







The charismatic cosmetic surgeon Doctor Coppelius comes to town to build his impressive clinic. He presents his gorgeous (animated) muse, Coppelia, as the perfect advert for his skills.

Coppelius quickly seduces the townspeople to be "improved". But they emerge from the clinic looking eerily blank and too vain to be kind to each other. While giving them their beauty treatments, the Doctor is simultaneously extracting the most special qualities from their personalities!

His evil plan is to steal the energy from Franz's beating heart and use it to bring his Coppelia creation to life.





### What do you hope audiences will get best external image, but what's inside should from Coppelia?

My first hope is that the audience will understand that Ballet is an art form not just related to theatre. The magic of live performance is one of the things that made me decide to start this career, but Ballet in Cinema can work beautifully, as this movie will show.

### What are some of the key themes of the story you're hoping to bring across?

My character Doctor Coppelius is a cosmetic surgeon, and the film explores that "beauty" is not enough without depth. In Italy we say "not everything that sparkles is gold", which I think is particularly relevant today. Everybody works very hard to cultivate the



be fed in an equal way.

### What do you love most about dance as a medium for storytelling?

Once a friend of mine took me to Palazzo Sacchetti in Rome where Francesco Salviati painted a fresco showing David dancing in front of Ark of the Covenant and he told me "you see David, when he has in front of him the presence of God, the first thing he does is to dance". He made me recognise that I do one of the most wonderful jobs in the world, that has such a powerful potential for communication - and it's a language that we make use of in this film.

### How was it working with the production team to make this film?

When we started this film, I had just suffered the loss of my best friend. I started the first day crying and by the last I was smiling of joy. The care of the directors, producers and everyone involved was like fresh air to me. The experience of learning new things every day, feeling the love of every single person involved, working next to Darcey and Irek, doing research at night for the character, watching the work of Eduardo de Filippo and Alberto Sordi and the amazing times spent together like a family will stay with me forever.



### Coppelia

Coppelia is Doctor Coppelius' mysterious and fascinating muse. She manages to make Franz follow her into the clinic, which convinces Swan to break in to rescue him and discover the sinister truth: Coppelia is just a sophisticated robot!







Coppelia is the brainchild of award-winning British filmmaker Jeff Tudor. Jeff wanted to create an original, hybrid film for a broad family audience, using the language of dance, music and animation. In Steven De Beul and Ben Tesseur, he found the ideal partners who shared the same vision.

Before Coppelia, Jeff specialised in capturing and adapting theatre productions for the screen, with his production company, 3 minutes West. He has directed many multi-camera performance captures including an event cinema series for Pathé Live and commissions for the BBC. Jeff's films have been screened at many arts film festivals and by broadcasters including BBC, NHK, PBS, Sky Arts and ZDF.

- · Revisor BBC
- \* Betroffenheit BBC
- \* A Swan Lake NRK, SVT
- \* NDT Live event cinema series. Pathé Live
- . Cinderella event cinema. Sky Arts

- event cinema
- \* Mata Hari NHK, Mezzo

### **AWARDS**

- Rose d'Or (Arts) 2018
- Golden Prague Czech Crystal (Performing Arts) 2018

### \* The Nutcracker & the Mouse King

Jeff Tudor: When I was a child, I loved films that mixed live action and animation. I found it magical, watching Gene Kelly dance with an animated character (Invitation to the Dance and

Anchors Aweigh); Mary Poppins, stepping into an illustrated world that came to life; the children's adventures in Bedknobs and Broomsticks. It has always been stimulating for children when live action characters explore animated worlds, and I hope we have recreated that magic for today's audience.

What are some of the key themes of the story you're hoping

**ALL:** Learn to be happy with who you are – and don't try to be

something you're not because of someone else's ideals. Who's

True beauty comes from within, and it's dangerous to be too

concerned with outward appearances. Coppelia is the story

(gently told) of the commercialisation of beauty and the negative

effect of the images we are all force-fed - dangerous, hyper-real,

superficial, Photoshopped interpretations of 'beauty'.

Interview with the directors

What do you hope audiences will get from Coppelia?

\* will be drawn into the fantasy world and the unique way of

\*enjoy a cinematic experience that goes beyond their

\* leave the cinema feeling positive – humming the music and

\* pick up a little of the underlying message: superficial beauty is

not everything - true beauty comes from within - and diversity

is something to be celebrated. We also hope the film goes

beyond the 'dance' audience and reaches a mainstream, family

**ALL:** We hope the audiences:

story-telling;

dancing

audience.

to bring across?

to say what's beautiful?

### Steven De Beul & Ben Tesseur

Steven De Beul and Ben Tesseur are Belgian directors, animators producers, and founders of the stop motion studio Beast Animation. They are known for their roles in several acclaimed films, series and commercials.

- Annecy 2019 Sponsor Trailer (directors)
- Rusty (Rintie) TV series, Avrotros, Ketnet (directors)
- Mister Paper TV series, Avrotros, Ketnet, NDR (directors)
- This Magnificent Cake (producers)

- George & Paul (co-producers)
- Panique Au Village TV specials, series & feature film
- Dimitri TV special and series (co-

Coppelia is their debut feature film.

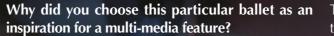
### \* Oh Willy... (producers)

TV series, NTR, Ketnet

(co-producers & animation)

directors & co-producers)

Another important message of the story is that love conquers all!



ALL: What inspired us was an interesting storyline, a message that is very relevant to today's audience, and a strong female lead. The theme also provided us with an ideal starting point for mixing live action and animated characters.

The choreography was specially made for the film, created with the animated elements in mind. We use a different visual language / medium compared to a theatre performance.

The choreography was created in collaboration with Ted Brandsen (choreographer), the dancers of Dutch National Ballet and other cast members.

### to anything you wouldn't get with live-action set design?

looking for a strong visual setting. We had more freedom to develop this by using CG sets mixed with live action props and elements.

On one hand we have the organic world of Swan and her friends. Even though Swan's environment is recognisable, it's a world filled with music and dance, where people CG allowed us to create a world for Swan that is quirky, with an illustrated feel. On the other hand, we have the clinical, sinister world of Doctor Coppelius, and CG and her athletic dance ability. And Daniel Camargo, enabled us to create a huge scale clinic for the Doctor.

While the CG sets gave us certain freedoms, they also brought a lot of restrictions too, of course!

### How are you using the animation to tell more of the story?

**ALL:** The animation allows us to take the audience into a fantasy world. The 3D characters – Coppelia and the Doctor's Assistants – represent what is fake and superficial.

The animation of the townspeople, after they are treated by the Doctor, supports the allegorical idea that they sell their souls to Doctor Coppelius: when he performs his 'treatment' on them, he tricks them into believing they have been transformed. They think they see a new version of themselves reflected in the mirror, but actually it's just a trick like a Snapchat or Instagram filter. The 'treatment' the Doctor performs is just a ruse for him to extract the 'essence' from the townspeople's characters, leaving them vain and self-obsessed.

### How did you go about casting the film? What was important for you to have in the performances as this is a non-verbal story?

**ALL:** As directors, we had to be totally confident Does the animated element give you access the actors could portray their characters with depth, intelligence and heart - without words. Everyone in this film is a serious, sensitive artist. Working in a ALL: Our story is told without words, so we were green / blue screen environment, we relied heavily on the actors using their imaginations and responding to placeholder props and set elements which were only animated in later. So our cast members also had to have vivid imaginations!

We wanted a diverse cast, to reflect the reality of today's society. Luckily for us, the ballet company we interact in a different way to how we act in real life. collaborated with, Dutch National Ballet, is pretty diverse and very international. Michaela DePrince town is colourful, sweet and quirky, and low-tech. stood out for us. Her charisma, her strong personality a fantastic dancer who also has a wonderful ability to act naturally - and great chemistry with Michaela. Vito Mazzeo was a natural choice for our villain

> JT: I've seen Vito playing many villainous stage role and knew he would bring something special to th role of the Doctor!

> We also wanted a cast that included international icons of the dance world, such as Darcey Bussell and Irek Mukhamedov.

### How have you chosen to approach music in

**ALL:** It was very important to us to have a film score rather than a ballet score. We wanted the viewer to have a familiar response to what they were hearing, the score should sound like a film - expressive, emotive, ambient. Compared to the original music for the 150-year old ballet Coppelia, our score is a much stronger story-telling element, supporting the action and emotions. We also use a broader range of music and instruments than in the original stage ballet, mixing electronic and classical sounds, and using these to develop specific themes for certain characters and emotions.

### Can you describe the visual style of Coppelia, and the choices behind the animated set design?

ALL: We wanted to create something out of the ordinary, full of fantasy, but believable: we must believe that our characters can live, work, eat, drink and dance in this world. We have developed our own world, together with art director Erik Fokkens and production designer Vincent de Pater.

There's a clear visual difference between Swan's world and the world of Doctor Coppelius. Swan's For the Doctor's clinic we use harder colours and textures, with Coppelia's signature colour a very harsh

In order to create better integration between live action and CG, we use both real and animated props. A bicycle may be real in one shot and drawn in another.

Some of our set design choices were actually governed by technical or practical requirements. For example, our cast needed enough space to dance!





### Submarine

The Amsterdam based production house Submarine was founded in 2000 by Bruno Felix & Femke Wolting. Over the years Submarine has established itself as an innovative company that produces feature films, animation, documentaries, and transmedia, all with an international focus. As the premier animation studio in NL, Submarine creates compelling and visually-stunning stories for both the big and small screen. Submarine was awarded Producer of the Year during Cartoon Movie 2019 in Bordeaux. Recent titles include the feature films Where is Anne Frank directed by Ari Folman, Best Birthday Ever, Apollo 10 1/2: A Space Age Adventure from director Richard Linklater for Netflix and the series Fox & Hare and Undone season 1 and 2 for Amazon Prime.

### Lunanime

Lunanime is a production company based in Ghent (Belgium) which focuses on fiction and animation projects, shorts, series as well as features films, a.o. Bloomstreet 11, Mosaic, Coppelia, The Siren, Funan, A cat in Paris, Ollie... The company was founded in 2008 as part of the Lumière group. Animation projects are produced inhouse in Lunanime's 2D animation studio - Studio Lumière - or for stopmotion at our partner company - Beast animation.

### 3 minutes West

3 minutes West is an award-winning independent production company founded by Director/Producer Jeff Tudor and Producer Adrienne Liron. The company is based in Amsterdam and Manchester.

Coppelia is 3 minutes West's first mixed-media feature. Until now, the company's focus has been producing arts programming for event cinema and TV. 3 minutes West has produced many featurelength, multi-camera recordings / adaptations of stage productions for the screen. Broadcast and distribution partners include the BBC, Pathé Live and Sky Arts. 3 minutes West's films have been screened at international arts film festivals and won awards including the Rose d'Or (Betroffenheit for the BBC). Coppelia marks the company's shift of focus to mixed media / cross-genre storytelling.

### **MotionWorks**

MotionWorks was founded in 1998 by Tony Loeser and partners. In June 2019, Romy Roolf - executive producer at the company since the very beginning and the experienced producer Grit Wißkirchen took over the management of the company.

The studio's portfolio includes international projects, which have been developed in-house, such as the original series The Adventures of the Young Marco Polo and Mullewapp 1 and 2 based on the 3 friends stories by Helme Heine. MotionWorks takes particular care to select great projects for international, cross-media exploitation. The resulting productions are artistically demanding and produced in a variety of technologies, with a special focus on a combination of live action and animation similar to Coppelia.





### Production note

and theatre productions to the big screen, initiated the idea for Coppelia under his Dutch-British banner 3 minutes West. who immediately supported the ambitious project and proposed Submarine as a suitable lead producing partner with experience of directing mixed media features.

Bruno Felix, co-founding chief of Amsterdam-based multiplatform production house Submarine: "Jeff's idea to create a hybrid between dance and animation touched on our passion for hybrid productions. We loved to become partner for our animation knowledge – and our fearless approach to complex productions."

When our Belgian co-directors were added to the team, it seemed only logical to look for a Belgian coproducer, which we found in the person of Annemie Degryse, founder of Lunanime,

Director Jeff Tudor, who has brought many outstanding dance and known for her sharp eye for artistically interesting projects. Our other partner MotionWorks is one of the leading studios in Germany and has experience in both 2D and 3D animation Their first stop was Dutch public broadcaster, AVROTROS, and the combination of animation and live action. And since the origin of the story lies in Germany, this was a perfect match.









# Cast & crew

Michaela DePrince (USA) Swan

Daniel Camargo (Brazil) Franz

Vito Mazzeo (Italy) Doctor Coppelius

Darcey Bussell (UK) Mayor Irek Mukhamedov (Russia) Baker

**Directors** Jeff Tudor, Steven De Beul, Ben Tesseur **Script** Jeff Tudor, Steven De Beul, Ben Tesseur

Producers Bruno Felix, Femke Wolting and Janneke van de Kerkhof

(Submarine), Adrienne Liron (3 minutes West)

Co-producers Annemie Degryse (Lunanime),

Romy Roolf (MotionWorks)

Choreographer Ted Brandsen

Composer Maurizio Malagnini

Director of Photography Tristan Oliver BSC



