

## Malina



One of the most fertile and furious blends of literature and cinema, “**Malina**,” the German director Werner Schroeter’s 1991 adaptation of Ingeborg Bachmann’s 1971 novel, is available to stream from *mubi*. Its pedigree is imposing—the script was written by the Nobel Prize-winning writer Elfriede Jelinek—and its embodiment of Bachmann’s harrowing vision is exhilarating and terrifying. The film stars Isabelle Huppert as an unnamed writer in modern-day Vienna, who is tormented by memories of her abusive

father (Fritz Schediwy), a Nazi, and of the Second World War. She lives with an elegant literary man named Malina (Mathieu Carrière) and takes a younger lover, Ivan (Can Togay); she teaches philosophy and writes poetry in a state of ecstatic rage (in the form of letters, most never sent). She's driven by nightmares, abuses pills, and lives at an exhausting pitch of impulsive chaos. Schroeter conjures her creative and destructive energy with color-streaked, high-contrast images, culminating in a conflagration that evokes the passions of a mind on fire.

— [\*Richard Brody\*](#)