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SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

# A FANTASTIC WOMAN

**A Film by Sebastián Lelio**

**Official Selection:**

Telluride Film Festival 2017

Toronto Int'l Film Festival 2017

104 min

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## A FANTASTIC WOMAN

### THE CAST

|                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Marina          | DANIELA VEGA      |
| Orlando         | FRANCISCO REYES   |
| Gabo            | LUIS GNECCO       |
| Sonia           | ALINE KUPPENHEIM  |
| Bruno           | NICOLÁS SAAVEDRA  |
| Adriana         | AMPARO NOGUERA    |
| Gastón          | NÉSTOR CANTILLANA |
| Doctor          | ALEJANDRO GOIC    |
| Alessandra      | ANTONIA ZEGERS    |
| Singing Teacher | SERGIO HERNÁNDEZ  |

# A FANTASTIC WOMAN

## THE FILMMAKERS

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Director                | SEBASTIÁN LELIO  |
| Screenplay              | SEBASTIÁN LELIO<br>AND GONZALO MAZA  |
| Producers               | JUAN DE DIOS LARRAÍN, PABLO<br>LARRAÍN, SEBASTIÁN LELIO AND<br>GONZALO MAZA        |
| Co-Producers            | JANINE JACKOWSKI, JONAS<br>DORNBACH, MAREN ADE, FERNANDA<br>DEL NIDO               |
| Executive Producers     | JEFF SKOLL, JONATHAN KING, ROCÍO<br>JADUE Z., MARIANE HARTARD, BEN<br>VON DOBENECK |
| Associate Producer      | ZDF/ARTE ALEXANDER BOHR  |
| Associate Producer      | MARTÍN CÁRCAMO   |
| Music                   | MATTHEW HERBERT  |
| Line Producer           | EDUARDO CASTRO   |
| Director of Photography | BENJAMÍN ECHAZARRETA A.C.C   |
| Production Designer     | ESTEFANÍA LARRAÍN  |
| Costume Designer        | MURIEL PARRA   |
| Editor                  | SOLEDAD SALFATE  |
| Sound Design            | TINA LASCHKE   |

## **A FANTASTIC WOMAN**

### **SYNOPSIS**

Marina and Orlando are in love and planning for the future.

Marina is a young waitress and aspiring singer. Orlando is 20 years older than her, and owns a printing company.

After celebrating Marina's birthday one evening, Orlando falls seriously ill. Marina rushes him to the emergency room, but he passes away just after arriving at the hospital.

Instead of being able to mourn her lover, suddenly Marina is treated with suspicion. The doctors and Orlando's family don't trust her. A woman detective investigates Marina to see if she was involved in his death. Orlando's ex-wife forbids her from attending the funeral. And to make matters worse, Orlando's son threatens to throw Marina out of the flat she shared with Orlando.

Marina is a trans woman and for most of Orlando's family, her sexual identity is an aberration, a perversion.

So Marina struggles for the right to be herself. She battles the very same forces that she has spent a lifetime fighting just to become the woman she is now – a complex, strong, forthright and fantastic woman.

## **A FANTASTIC WOMAN**

### **DIRECTOR'S NOTE**

I see A FANTASTIC WOMAN as a film of aesthetic splendor, narrative vigor, tension and emotion. Polytonal, multi-experiential, multi-emotional. It's a film that is both a celebration and examination of its main character: Marina Vidal. What will the viewers see when they see Marina? A woman, a man, or the sum of both? They will see a human being who constantly changes before their eyes, who flows, vibrates, and modifies herself. But what they are seeing isn't precisely what they are seeing, and this condition turns Marina into a vortex that attracts the viewer's fantasy and desire, inviting them to explore the limits of their own empathy.

-Sebastián Lelio

## A FANTASTIC WOMAN

### INTERVIEW WITH SEBASTIÁN LELIO

#### **How did you conceive A FANTASTIC WOMAN?**

I like to think that the film, like Marina, its central character, is not afraid of pleasure and like her, has a striking and shiny surface. It tries to combine the narrative and the visual pleasure in games of appearances that want to captivate. A sort of Trojan horse loaded with humanity.

#### **What is your crusade, or your challenge, as the director of A FANTASTIC WOMAN?**

I would like the viewer to end up intimately tied to Marina. So, regardless of his or her beliefs, values, or vision of the world, watching her so much on screen, the viewer ends up feeling like her. And from empathizing with her so much, the viewer wants to see her survive and prevail. Film invites us to feel like others, to experiment emotions that are often new to us, and these discoveries occur not within the films, but within the viewers themselves. Film prepares us for life and allows us to explore our spiritual elasticity. I would like the viewer to surrender him or herself to a challenging journey, and to do so with open arms. I would also like the viewer to feel that he or she has seen something beautiful. To feel that he or she was in contact with beauty.

#### **What has the journey from Gloria to A FANTASTIC WOMAN been like?**

I feel that in some ways this film is a more complex construction than Gloria because it is several films at the same time. But in spite of the fact that A FANTASTIC WOMAN exists in a different cinematographic territory that operates far beyond realism, it has, just as with Gloria, a higher inclination towards questions than towards answers. At the same time, it examines and exalts a powerful female character, yet for several reasons, A FANTASTIC WOMAN is much more than a film about a woman.

#### **At a moment in time in which the transgender issue is being discussed around the world, where on the map is A FANTASTIC WOMAN?**

I don't like judging while filming. I don't like looking down when filming, feeling that the characters are wrong or inferior to me. I need to situate myself in a place from which I can understand them, even the antagonists. When we began writing this film, the transgender issue hadn't exploded in popular culture like it did a year and half ago. Suddenly, the transgender figure moved from a misunderstood marginality to installing itself in a central place in our current collective imagery. I think that the film communes intimately with its character's identity. In Spanish, the word that is used to refer to sexual identity is the same one that is used to allude to narrative style: genre. In this sense, the film itself is "trans-genre". It's a romance film, a ghost film, a fantasy film, a film about humiliation and revenge, a document of reality, a character study. The identity of the film itself fluctuates, it doesn't set, it doesn't stop, and it refuses to be reduced to one single thing. The fact that it can't be explained in any single way is perhaps one of A FANTASTIC WOMAN'S most contemporary aspects.

**A FANTASTIC WOMAN**  
**INTERVIEW WITH DANILA VEGA**

**Who is Marina Vidal?**

Marina Vidal is a 27-year-old waitress and singer. She is Orlando's partner, with whom she has an adult, loving, and committed relationship, in spite of their differences in age and social class. Marina, though far from being perfect, is a resilient woman who has quite an impressive level of compromise with her own life. She loves deeply, and this gives her the opportunity of loving herself and overcoming any adversity. She's a brave fighter who doesn't falter when the world puts her to the test. She has a vital force that is capable of carrying her through life, against all odds. Today, while all of us are somehow standing on the edge of a precipice, she doesn't even look at it, and searches for beauty instead. She understands that even Orlando's death, or what her being transgender means to everyone else, will not keep her from pushing forward.

**What did playing Marina mean to you?**

It was, by far, one of the most difficult things I've ever done in my life. It was very complex on an emotional level because of the way in which I began to go deeper into the role, and the way in which I began converting all of my emotions in order to give the character a life of her own. On the other hand, it's been one of the most gratifying experiences. It's been a tremendous honor to be directed by Sebastian, who I admire greatly. I am also proud to be part of a team in which all us of, including production, art, camera, wardrobe, sound, photography, etc., feel very close and special for having participated in this project. A special mention goes out to my fellow cast members, especially to Francisco Reyes. I'd like to thank all of them for the experience and affection.

**What do you hope to happen with the film? What would you like for people to take away?**

I would like for lots of people to watch it, and to see their reactions and discover the way in which we understand relationships and affection. As well as the way in which we conceive love.

## A FANTASTIC WOMAN

### INTERVIEW WITH FRANSICO REYES

#### **What is the story between Orlando and Marina?**

It's a story of true love: Marina and Orlando simply love each other, and after meeting, they have discovered a refuge in one another. To them, the differences in their ages and sexual cultures are not barriers. It's inspiring to see how two beings whose intimacies are unknown to us, and whose lives we could prejudge maliciously, surrender themselves without hesitation, without fear, and without fuss. A relationship in which judgments on good and evil, on what's correct and what's incorrect, what's normal and abnormal, simply aren't issues. Where a space for love is simply made evident and recognized.

#### **Who is Marina to him? Who is Orlando to her?**

To Orlando, Marina is an inspiring being that gives him new wings with which to enjoy life, that connects him to his love for what is honest, and allows him to find peace, affection, and company in her. Although he appears to be a regular man, he possesses a great internal strength, freedom, and courage that allows him to see Marina and recognize her as an extraordinary and kind being. For her part, Marina, whose life is a constant struggle to live harmoniously within her social setting, recognizes in Orlando the simplicity and authenticity of this mature man, and discovers a refuge in him: a true and calm love. The two are bound together in their courage and in the conscious or unconscious search for what is beautiful and authentic.

#### **What context does Orlando have to face, and how does he defend the relationship?**

Orlando has broken away from his family. With the exception of his brother, who admires him greatly. He has neither his ex-wife's nor his son's comprehension, nor that of the rest of the family, whom after his death, unleash all of the violence provoked by ignorance and vulnerability of the unknown onto Marina. But this is not an issue for him, and he surrenders to his relationship without considering anybody's opinion or stance. He doesn't question himself over whether the person he loves is a man, a woman, or a transgender person. This honest and authentic attitude surrounds him with a natural aura that prevents other people from interfering with him. There's no intellectual or ideological defense of his relationship with Marina. His great defense is the authentic love that he feels for her.

## A FANTASTIC WOMAN

### ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

**SEBASTIÁN LELIO** is a Chilean film director and screenwriter. His first feature film, *LA SAGRADA FAMILIA* (2006) premiered at the San Sebastian Film Festival and received several awards and worldwide recognition. *NAVIDAD* was written with the support of the Cannes Film Festival Residence and premiered in the 2009 Directors' Fortnight section. *EL AÑO DEL TIGRE* was presented [at the](#) 2011 Locarno Film Festival. He was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship grant and received the support of the DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm.

Lelio's fourth feature film, the internationally acclaimed *GLORIA*, obtained a Silver Bear for Best Actress at the 2013 Berlin Film Festival. *GLORIA* represented Chile for the Academy Awards and Goya Awards. The National Board of Review chose it as one of the year's five best films and it was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best International Film.

*A FANTASTIC WOMAN*, was supported by Berlinale's Residency. The film is co-produced by Fabula (Chile), Participant Media (USA), Komplizen Film (Germany), Muchas Gracias (Chile) and Setembro Cine (Spain).

Lelio is currently filming his first English-speaking feature film, *DISOBEDIENCE*, starring Rachel Weisz, Rachel McAdams and Alessandro Nivola.

## **A FANTASTIC WOMAN**

### **ABOUT DANIELA VEGA**

**DANIELA VEGA** is a Chilean actress and singer who has worked in cinema, theater, and music. She has participated in films, video clips, plays and musical collaborations with other national artists. In 2011 she landed a leading actress role in the Gabinete play, **LA MUJER MARIPOSA, BIODRAMA DE UNA TRANSFIGURACIÓN (THE BUTTERFLY WOMAN, BIODRAMA OF A TRANSFIGURATION)**, directed by Martín de La Parra. She continued this role for four seasons from 2011 to 2014.

In 2014, Vega designed and executed make-up and wardrobe for the play **PELIKANEN, LA NECESIDAD NO TIENE LEY (PELIKANEN, NEED KNOWS NO LAW)**, directed by Fabiolla Olivares and landed a starring role in the Chico Trujillo video clip, **CHATITO**, directed by Germán Bobe.

Vega continued to build her career with lead starring roles in **MARIA, MIGRANTE** (where she also sang). Recently, her vocals have been featured in a video clip of the Chilean band “Artica & Las Magnéticas”

Daniela Vega recently received the Best Actress award at the Marseille International Film Festival for her role as Marina in **A FANTASTIC WOMAN**.