

**Panic / Radar Films / Savage Film / One Eyed / Versus**

present

# ALLELUIA

A film  
by

**Fabrice du Welz**

starring

**Laurent Lucas**

**Lola Dueñas**

with the participation of

**Helena Noguerra**

## SCREENINGS

**Friday, 22 May - 11:30 am / 7:30 pm**

**J.W. Mariott / Théâtre Croisette - 50, La Croisette**

Belgium / France - 2014 - Running-time: 1h30

***The director, Fabrice du Welz,  
and actors Laurent Lucas, Lola Dueñas and Helena Noguerra, are in  
Cannes on 22 and 23 May.***

INTERNATIONAL SALES	PRESS RELATIONS
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## Synopsis

**Michel is an inveterate womanizer and professional hustler. When he meets Gloria, she falls in love with him like the others. But more excessively. Gloria finds her reason to live in Michel. Their relation is passionate, limitless. When Gloria discovers Michel's hustling she becomes his accomplice rather than risk losing him. Together they embark on a wild and deadly odyssey. Their unfettered passions will drive them to the brink of insanity...**

***Alleluia* is the adaptation of a news event which shook the United States from 1947 to 1949. The story of Martha Beck and Raymond Fernandez, a young nurse who meets, thanks to the "lonely hearts column", a gigolo making his living off of widows.**

## Fabrice du Welz

(Director / Co-writer / Co-producer)

Graduate of the Conservatory of Dramatic Art of Liège and INSAS in Brussels, Fabrice du Welz quickly makes his entrance into television as screenwriter of humorous sequences for *La grande famille* and *Nulle Part Ailleurs* by Canal +.

His first short *When You're in Love, It's Wonderful* (1999 - Grand Prix for Short Films at the Fantastic Festival of Gérardmer), already presages the strong and singular identity of the director.

In 2004, Fabrice du Welz stands out as a figurehead of genre cinema with *Calvaire* (Laurent Lucas, Jackie Berroyer and Philippe Nahon). Presented at the International Critics Week at Cannes, the horror film wins in 2005 the Jury Prize as well as that of the International Critics at Gérardmer.

He next explores the fantastic with a trip to the Thai jungles (*Vinyan*, starring Emmanuelle Béart and Rufus Sewell), before launching himself into the whodunit with *Colt 45* (starring Gérard Lanvin and Joey Starr, scheduled for release in 2014).

In 2013, he works once again with actor Laurent Lucas for the second episode of an Ardennes trilogy of which *Calvaire* is the first opus. Free adaptation of an item in the American news featuring the "Honeymoon Killers", *Alleluia* plunges us into the meanders of destructive passion.

## Laurent Lucas

(Michel)

Laurent Lucas enters the National Theatre of Strasbourg in 1993. Quickly, he performs in play after play under the direction of Joël Jouanneau, Jean-Louis Martinelli and Julie Brochen, before being noticed in the cinema thanks to the role which Laurence Ferreira Barbosa offers him in *I Hate Love* in 1997. He next appears in *Pola X*, and *Haut les cœurs!* starring Karin Viard for which he's nominated for the César for Best Hopeful in 2000.

He's subsequently revealed to general audiences thanks to the role of Michel, in *With a Friend Like Harry...*, directed by Dominik Moll (in competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 2000 and the Césars in 2001), whom he'll work with again in *Lemming* in 2005. He then alternates between drama (his double role as priest/poet in *Tiresia* in 2003), comedy (*Laughter and Punishment*, 2003, co-starring José Garcia) and thriller (*Who Killed Bambi?* 2003), before being tortured by an innkeeper in *Calvaire* (2004).

His long filmography includes singular films such as *Adieu* (2003), *Les Invisibles* (2005), *La Saison des orphelins* (2007), *La Capture* (2007), as well as leading roles in television films (*Qui sème le vent*, 2011, and *Le Métis de dieu*, 2012).

## Lola Dueñas

(Gloria)

Trained under Juan Carlos Corazza, Lola Dueñas began her career in the cinema with Salvador García Ruiz in *Mensaka* (1998). A career which literally takes off when she wins the Best Actress Prize at the Toulouse Festival and Best Female Hopeful Prize, awarded by Unión de Actores in Spain.

Her performance as the life-saving worker, Rosa, in Alejandro Amenábar's *Mar Adentro* (2004) won her the Goya for Best Actress, as well as the Prize of the Círculo de Escritores Cinematográficos and l'Unión de Actores for Best Female Supporting Role.

Lola Dueñas is one of Pedro Almodovar's fetish actresses. After a small part in *Talk to Her* (2002), he offers her a supporting role by the side of Penélope Cruz in *Volver*, a film crowned with the (collective) Best Actress Award at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival. Three years later, she collaborates with him again in *Broken Embraces* (2009) and more recently in the comedy *I'm So Excited* (2013).

After *Me Too* (2010, directed by Alvaro Pastor) and Antonio Naharro (2010 Goya for Best Actress), the French cinema opens its doors to her with *Angel & Tony* (2011), directed by Alix Delaporte, and Philippe Le Guay's comedy *The Women on the 6th Floor* (2011). In 2013, the Spanish actress appears in *Suzanne* with François Damians.

# Helena Noguerra

(Solange)

With her focus on music, while also becoming known as a model, writer, actress, director, and additionally muse of Indochina in the video *Your Dark Eyes* (1986), Helena Noguerra welcomes with open arms her well-earned and ascending success.

While she releases her own albums (*Projet bikini*, 1998, *Année zéro*, 2013) or being regularly invited to take part on those of others (Marc Collin and his *Nouvelle Vague*), she makes her first timid appearance in the cinema in 1989 (*La Salle de bain*, Belgian film directed by John Lvoff) and on television (*Les hordes*, 1991).

One success follows another as of her performance in *Heartbreaker*, a colossal hit starring Roman Duris and Vanessa Paradis (2010). She continues with ever more highly acclaimed performances in comedies and French romantic comedies: *Ducoboo* (2011), *You Don't Choose Your Family* (2011) by Christian Clavier (2011), *La Clinique de l'Amour* (2012), and *Hôtel Normandy* (2013). The same year, after an appearance in *Je suis supporter du Standard*, the Franco-Belgian film, *La Marque des Anges*, enables her to rub shoulders in the thriller with co-stars Gérard Depardieu and Joey Starr.

## The producers

### Panique

Panique is a new production company, created by Vincent Tavier. Not only actor in, but equally co-screenwriter and production manager of *Man Bites Dog* (1992), Vincent Tavier his experiences since have been ever more diverse. He produces *Les carnets de Monsieur Manatane* (1992), collaborating once again with Benoît Poelvoorde. He's an actor in *Atomik Circus* (2004): in it, he plays Chief Brody next to Vanessa Paradis. He produces and co-screenwrites *A Town Called Panic*, the first animated feature by the authors of *Ernest & Celestine* (2002), which he equally coproduces. In 2003, he coproduces *Calvaire*, the first opus of Welz's Ardennes trilogy, of which *Alleluia* constitutes the second part. 2004 is the year of *Aaltra*, a film noir and deadpan road-movie by Benoît Delépine and Gustave de Kervern. Its production company La Partie recently produced *Je suis supporter du Standard* (2013) before producing *Alleluia* and a new 26-minute episode of *A Town Called Panic*, entitled *The Yule Log* with Panique.

## **Radar films**

Radar films sees itself one day in 2009, at the instigation of Clément Miserez, launched into the industry in 2003 with Michel Rodas' short *Bloody Pizza*. He's notably produced thrillers bordering on the fantastic: *Walled In* (France-Canada, 2008), starring Mischa Barton and Tim Allen; *Faces in the Crowd* (USA, 2011) starring Milla Jovovich; and Pascal Laugier's *The Secret*, starring Jessica Biel (USA-Canada, 2012). He winds up 2013 with *The Love Punch*, a comedy directed by Joel Hopkins starring Pierce Brosnan and Emma Thompson, as well as *Belle & Sebastien*, directed by Nicolas Vanier, starring Tchéky Karyo.

## **Savage film**

Bart Van Langendonck founded the Brussels independent production company, Savage Film, in 2007. Savage Film produces fiction films, documentaries and dance films, the common denominator of which are versatility, controversy, and audacity. Savage focuses on the mixing of genres, between fiction, documentary and art. Savage Films came to international recognition further thanks to Michael's R. Roskam's film, *Bullhead* (*Rundskop*), which shot to the top of the Belgian box-office in 2011, and was nominated for a César as well as an Oscar for Best Foreign Film in 2012. The film has been sold to more than 20 territories.

## **One eyed**

Fabrice du Welz founded the production company, One Eyed, in 2007 for his film *Vinyan*, shot in Thailand. Since then, One Eyed has tried first and foremost to coproduce and accompany the director's projects by surrounding itself with solid and competent partners.

## **In the wings: "From a news item to the film"**

The inspiration for *Alleluia* was a sordid news item which made the headlines in the United States in 1949. Return to the story of Martha Beck and Raymond Fernandez, "The Lonely Hearts Killers".

On 4 January 1949, a strange trio settled down on Long Island, in a flat rented on Adeline Street. Raymond Fernandez, 34 years old, had just asked in marriage one of the two women accompanying him, Janet Fay, age 66. His other companion, Martha Beck, 28 years old, a former nurse whom Fernandez presented as his sister-in-law, was in reality his mistress. During the night, following an argument, Martha smashed Janet Fay's skull in with a hammer. Raymond finished off his "fiancée" by choking her. This atrocious murder marked the start of the long escape-on-the-run the stars of which the American press would baptise the "Lonely Hearts Killers".

Fernandez had long practice as a gigolo and swindler. He robbed lonely women of their savings whom he met by answering classified ads. It is in this way that he meets Martha Beck in 1947. Martha is a corpulent if not altogether obese woman, following a glandular malformation. After completing nursing school, she has difficulty in finding stable jobs. She has a first child, a girl, of an unknown father. Then a boy with a certain Beck, who marries Martha before quickly divorcing her.

Fernandez lives briefly with her. Everywhere they go, Martha declares that they're going to get married. But her lover returns to New York. The young woman joins him there by surprise. Martha, giving in to his quirks, Fernandez tolerates her. Head over heels in love, Martha places her children with the Salvation Army. Raymond then informs her about his swindles. So she decides to team up with him. In August 1948, Fernandez weds Myrtle Young in Arkansas. Martha strives to prevent their union from being consumed. When the new Mrs Fernandez ends up by rebelling, Raymond gives her a good dose of horse sedatives and abandons her on a bus on its way to Little Rock. Myrtle will die the very next day in a hospital... As of then, there won't be any way back for Martha and Raymond, henceforth criminal lovers.

But the worst arises with Fernandez's ultimate conquest, Delphine Downing, a young widow and mother of a two-year-old girl, Rainelle. Playing their usual brother-sister duo, Martha and Raymond settle down in Downing's home. When the widow begins to show signs of doubt, Fernandez gives her sleeping drugs. The little girl calls out for her mother and cries. In a towering rage, Martha sexually assaults her. Fearing Delphine's reaction when she wakes up, Fernandez kills her in her sleep. He buries the body in the cellar. The couple remains for several days in the house while little Rainelle keeps calling out for her mother. Martha finally drowns her in the sink...

On 28 February 1949, alerted by suspicious neighbours, the police show up just as the two lovers are coming back from the movie theatre. The two freshly dug graves in the cellar are discovered. Arrested, Raymond and Martha confess to everything, with all the sordid details. Their confession is no less than 76 pages long. The very next day, the story makes the headlines. The newspapers baptise Fernandez and Beck "The Lonely Hearts Killers". Martha appears as the scapegoat. Her weight and barely advantageous appearance are highlighted. Given the mediatisation of the case, the Governor of the State of New York convinces the State of Michigan to extradite the criminal lovers. The consequence is simple: Raymond Fernandez and Martha Beck face the death penalty.

The trial makes a whirlwind in the press during the entire next summer. On 22 August 1949, at the conclusion of several widely mediatised weeks of trial, Raymond Fernandez and Martha Beck are finally sentenced to the electric chair. Martha, executed after her lover, faces her fate with self-assurance, defying one last time social standards by claiming that nobody can understand what unites her to Raymond. Given her extreme corpulence, her agony lasts several long minutes. Ending a deadly passion which, widely surpassing any work of fiction, continues to inspire novelists and filmmakers alike.

## CAST

Michel - Laurent Lucas  
Gloria - Lola Dueñas  
Madeleine - Stéphane Bissot  
Marguerite - Edith Le Merdy  
Gabriella - Anne-Marie Loop  
Solange - Helena Noguerra  
Eve - Pili Groyne  
Father Luis - David Murgia

## CREW

Director - Fabrice Du Welz  
Script and adaptation - Fabrice Du Welz, Vincent Tavier  
Dialogues - Roman Protat  
Producers - Vincent Tavier, Clément Miserez, Matthieu Warter  
Co-producers - Bart Van Langendonck, Fabrice Du Welz, Jacques-Henri, Olivier  
Bronckart  
Cinematographer - Manu Dacosse  
Sound engineer - Ludo Van Pachterbeke  
Art director - Emmanuel De Meulemeester  
Costume designer - Florence Scholtes, Christophe Pidre  
Make-up artist - Urteza Da Fonseca  
Editor - Anne-Laure Guégan  
Sound mixer - Emmanuel De Boissieu  
Sound editor - Fred Meert  
Original music - Vincent Cahay  
Storyboard - Olivier Legrain  
Communication - CUISTAX (Philippe Kauffmann/Laurence Marichal)

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WILD SIDE