

"A PARTICULARLY POIGNANT PIECE OF CINEMA  
IN THE CURRENT SOCIAL CLIMATE"

CHRIS OLSON - UK FILM REVIEW



NIMISHA MENON - INDIE SHORTS MAG



STELLA VELON

ALAN SMYTH

# THE CRITIC



BEST INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE  
STELLA VELON - THE CRITIC

THE PUNK FLOYD COMPANY



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\*FRIEDERIKE  
HAMMER\*

### BEST DIRECTOR

\*STELLA VELON\*

UK Film Review

# THE CRITIC

with STELLA VELON ALAN SMYTH

[Narrative Short, Drama]

Written & Directed by **STELLA VELON**

Produced by **JEAN GABRIEL KAUSS**

Edited by **IVAN ANDRIJANIC**

Cinematographer **AKIS KONSTANTAKOPOULOS**

Composer **ASAF SAGIV**



## SYNOPSIS

A starry-eyed actress with a troubled past faces her harshest critic during an interview gone wrong.

WATCH THE TRAILER [HERE](#)



## STELLA VELON as the Actress

Stella Velon began her acting career in France when a modeling job brought her to the set of the feature film 'Vive la Vie', starring Alexandra Lamy and Didier Bourdon. She went on to study at the prestigious Cours Viriot in Paris before moving to New York where she enrolled as a full-time student at the HB Studio. While still in drama school, Stella made her debut in a leading role in the independent feature 'Shutterbug' which premiered at Cinema Village NY. There, she continued to model and take jobs in theater, film, and television.

Some of Velon's film and TV credits include 'Baskets', 'Gossip Girl', 'Hoppus on Music', 'Men in Black 3', among others.

She is fluent in English and French and has been told to be a chameleon.

Stella currently lives and works in Los Angeles.



## ALAN SMYTH as the Interviewer

Alan Smyth was born, grew up and went to drama school (in that order) in Ireland. He worked in every major theatre in the country, mainly the prestigious Gate, Abbey and Gaiety Theatres, appearing in many classic works such as 'Hamlet', 'King Lear', 'Macbeth', 'The Importance of Being Earnest', 'Pride and Prejudice', 'Salome' and 'Lady Windermere's Fan'. He was a series regular for 5 years on Ireland's longest-running TV show, 'Fair City'.

Since moving to the US in 2006, he has worked mostly in TV, with recurring roles on shows such as 'Person's Unknown', 'Children's Hospital', 'The Last Ship', 'The Middleman', 'NCIS', along with many other guest appearances on shows that include 'Castle', 'CSY:NY', 'Leverage', 'Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior'. He has appeared in several movies including 'The Outfield' and can be seen next in the movie 'Poor Behavior', written and directed by Theresa Rebeck, which is released on May 27th.

He can be heard narrating a number of audio books on Amazon and Audible.

# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

'The Critic' is a short film about facing one's inner demons, with which I wanted to explore the psychology of what it is like to be confronted with one's harshest, most merciless critic: one's own self, and how destructive that little voice in our heads can be.

As an actress myself, I also wanted to weave in elements of what is happening at the moment within the entertainment industry and explore the perils and pressures of the profession while leaving the message of the film open to individual interpretation as I am a firm believer that how we perceive the world is how we experience it.

Moreover, in film and actors' minds, the boundaries between reality and fiction are often blurred to the point of not being able to tell one from the other, and I wanted the viewer to feel and experience the confusion and unease of walking that fine line. Jean-Paul Sartre famously said, "Acting is happy agony." There is a lot of truth to that statement, but this is not—or it is not only—what the film is about. It has multiple layers and realities playing simultaneously within it, and there is no right or wrong way to interpret it.

My intention with this piece is to fire up people's imagination, make them think and not spoon-feed the audience the answers like a lot of movies do.





## Writer/Director | STELLA VELON

'The Critic' marks Stella Velon's directorial debut. The film was shot on location in Los Angeles, CA.

Coming from an acting background, Stella's passion for the seventh art naturally evolved into her writing and directing her first short film. Her attention to detail and compelling storytelling has caught the attention of established film professionals, helping her to surround herself with a great group of talented individuals for her vision to come to life.

As a creator/screenwriter, Stella is developing several other projects, one of them a half-hour comedy series, inspired by her experiences as a model in the mecca of fashion: New York City.

## Producer/Executive Producer | JEAN GABRIEL KAUSS

Jean Gabriel Kauss is a renowned agent and the former president of JGK Inc., a top photography agency with offices in New York, Paris, and London, representing some of the biggest names in fashion and film such as Ruven Afanador, Gian Paolo Barbieri, Gilles Bensimon, Michel Comte, François Halard, James Houston, Dominique Issermann, Alix Malka, Thierry Mugler, Mickey Rourke, Lance Staedler, and Antoine Verglas among many others.

Jean Gabriel moved to Los Angeles in 2015 where he started a new film and TV production company.



## Cinematographer | AKIS KONSTANTAKOPOULOS

A graduate of Harvard University and the American Film Institute (AFI), Akis commenced his career serving as a 2nd Unit DP for Oscar nominated cinematographer Phedon Papamichael, ASC. A member of the International Cinematographers Guild (ICG), Akis has lensed more than 20 feature films and over 100 projects, including commercials, music videos, TV shows and short films. Some highlights of his recent projects include David L. Cunningham's period drama 'Jo, The Medicine Runner', starring Matt Dillon, Jim Caviezel and Ryan Potter; Kevin Pollak's directorial debut 'The Late Bloomer', starring J.K Simmons and 'Bereave', starring Jane Seymour, Malcolm McDowell, Keith Carradine, a best film awardee at 12 film festivals.



## Editor | IVAN ANDRIJANIC

Ivan Andrijanic has worked both in Europe and the United States. He is well versed in various film and TV genres and formats. He edited the action-packed thriller 'I.T.' starring Pierce Brosnan, and the critically acclaimed Adam Goldberg's comedy 'No Way Jose'.

Some of Ivan's credits also include the half-hour TV comedy 'Myrna' starring Marlo Bernier, a number of documentaries that won numerous festival awards, including Legendary's 'Make It Work', Ricky Schroder's 'Volunteer' and 'The Fighting Season', The Konwiser brothers' 'Inside Endurance', as well as commercials for top brands such as Grey Goose, Bentley, Bacardi and music videos for top hits such as Macy Gray's 'Beauty in the World' and her duet with Bobby Brown 'Real Love', among others.



## Composer | ASAF SAGIV

Asaf Sagiv is a film composer living and working in Los Angeles. He grew up in Israel, playing guitar and studying composition, and later relocated to the USA. He is a Summa Cum Laude graduate of Berklee College of Music in Boston ('07), and a recipient of the Film Scoring department Doug Timm Award for Outstanding Musicianship. He was selected to attend the Society of Composers & Lyricists (SCL) Mentor Program in Los Angeles Fall 2007. Asaf has recently scored a feature documentary narrated by Academy Award winning actor J.K. Simmons. His music has been featured in two major blockbusters: Gary Felder's 'Homefront' (Nu Image / Millennium Films) and 'Misconduct' (Lionsgate) starring Anthony Hopkins and Al Pacino.



## Q & A WITH WRITER/DIRECTOR

### STELLA VELON

The Critic is your first film. Did you always want to direct?

I have never really thought about it. I have always been in love with movies since I was a little girl. I grew up watching Baz Luhrmann's 'Strictly Ballroom' and 'Romeo + Juliet'. I must have seen these two over twenty times if not more! I was literally obsessed to the point that my parents got a little worried. What was funny about it is that at the time I was not paying attention to names and such things. It is only later that I found out that it was the same director who did both movies... and they both had the same impact on me. That really marked me, so I guess, yes, subconsciously I must have been thinking about it for a while.

You are in every scene of the film, how did you manage to juggle directing and performing at the same time? It must have been very challenging, especially for a first-time director.

It was! It was a very dense and intense shoot. Incredibly challenging too. We shot everything in two days, and everyone had to remain extremely focused. The secret to that is preparation! I did a huge amount of prep with my producer, my DP, my actor Alan Smyth, who was incredibly generous and talented and of course, I worked with my acting coach. When on set, I had no choice but to focus on my performance and trust that all that prep and work we did beforehand would pay off.

Nothing is ever perfect or exactly how you imagined it to be, but the experience was incredibly rewarding and I don't regret one bit of it.

What made you want to tell this specific story?

I am an actress. Every actor dreams of receiving a big award one day. I thought about that, and I thought about how that can attract a lot of jealousy, critique... Lots of pressure too. Once you're in the public eye, you will be judged. How you deal with that depends on how you talk to yourself, how you treat yourself. You know, that little voice in your head that never goes away? And sometimes, if you are not in a good place or have a good support system, that can destroy you. Look at how many great actors we lost to drug overdose over the past few years. So that is why I explored the subject of substance abuse too. I do not have an experience with it personally but I have witnessed it and lost some friends to it so I wanted this to be a tale of inspiration and hope. Hollywood can be a lonely place, and if you don't have a solid base, you can become easy prey to addiction, abuse, people trying to take advantage. Add a young woman to that equation. Or someone who's fragile and unprotected, as a lot of artists are. These are things that I wanted to explore with this piece while leaving it very open to interpretation at the same time, as I am a firm believer that how we perceive the world is how we experience it.

What is next for you?

After all that existential and heavy stuff I intend to be focusing more on the comedy series that I created. It's a girl-populated Entourage meets Friends, set in the mecca of fashion New York City and is loosely inspired by my experiences as a model there.



## Q & A WITH PRODUCER/EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JEAN GABRIEL KAUSS

You are a former fashion and beauty agent. What made you want to produce *The Critic*?

Stella and I have been working on her comedy series, which takes place in the fashion world in New York City. A world that I know inside and out from my twenty-plus years as a photography agent. When she first showed me her project I was so impressed with her writing and her characters were people that I have actually known and worked with. That blew me away, and I knew I had gold in my hands. When she came to me with her short film project, I did not hesitate for one second. The proof: we had an award-winning director who fell in love with the story and wanted to do it. When that couldn't happen due to scheduling conflicts, I encouraged Stella to do it herself. I have seen her at work and her attention to detail and eagerness to outdo herself, that I did not doubt for one second that she would do a great job.

The music plays a significant part in the film, especially in the bathroom scene. How did you choose the composer?

Stella had a specific song in mind when writing that scene, and we were going to use it but when we found Asaf Sagiv, who is a very talented young composer we knew that he would be perfect. And we were right. The film is highly interpretive and psychological, and it was very important for us to have the right music! Stella and Asaf worked very closely together, and it helped that Asaf could entirely identify with the artist's struggle that the film deals with.

You have represented some of the biggest names in photography. How is film different than the world of beauty and fashion?

Talent is talent, no matter what form of art we are talking about. My strength as an agent was my ability to spot talent even in those who have no proven track record. A great example is Francois Halard. He came to me as a perfect unknown and today he is the most celebrated interior photographer in the world! Michel Comte, who was also one of my top talents is another example of a cross-over into the world of filmmaking. His debut feature "The Girl from Nagasaki" was an official selection at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival. There is a lot of creativity in both worlds, but I would say that film is a more collaborative art form and also more demanding and exciting at the same time.

What are your hopes and ambitions for the film?

It is a beautiful accomplishment by a woman in this business (which is never easy!) and I would love to see a lot more of that. Women's voices need to be heard a lot more in Hollywood, as it is the case in Europe in general.

I hope that many people will get to see the film and be inspired by it themselves, as it is a meaningful project!

# FULL CREDITS

Written and Directed by  
Producer/Executive Producer  
Director of Photography  
Editor  
Music by

STELLA VELON  
JEAN GABRIEL KAUSS  
AKIS KONSTANTAKOPOULOS  
IVAN ANDRIJANIC  
ASAF SAGIV

## CAST

Actress  
Interviewer  
Director

STELLA VELON  
ALAN SMYTH  
TODD KARNER

Camera: RED Epic Dragon  
14m55s | Color | Digital | 5.1 Surround Sound | 23.98 fps |  
English



First Assistant Director  
First Assistant Camera  
Second Assistant Camera  
Sound Mixer  
Key Grip  
Grip  
Gaffer  
Best Boy  
Hair and Makeup Artist

Post Production Services Provided by  
Post Producer  
Music Executive Producer  
Supervising Sound Editor

Digital Intermediate by  
Digital Intermediate Supervisor  
Colorist

VFX Artist

Graphic Design by

Special Thanks

KARIM NABIL  
NATE ELEGINO  
MIGUEL A. TORRES  
COLIN HART  
BRIAN M. GURNETT  
TONY NALL  
ELISEE LAURENFANT  
KEVIN OGERT  
MUAMERA PULIC

BUFFALO 8  
JONATHAN SHELDON  
GREGORY RICHLING  
YAGMUR KAPLAN

BLACKLIST DIGITAL  
TIMS JOHNSON  
MARK TODD OSBORNE

SEBASTIEN PETIT

SYLVERE AZOULAI

TODD KARNER  
PUZANT GUERBOYAN  
LANCE STAEDLER





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[INSTAGRAM.COM/THECRITIC.SHORTFILM](https://www.instagram.com/thecritic.shortfilm)

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