

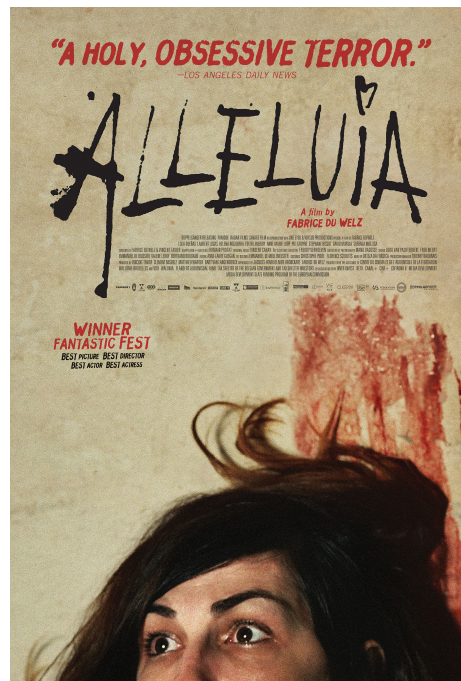
# DOPPELGÄNGER

RELEASING

presents

# ALLELUIA

A Film by Fabrice du Welz



90 min., Belgium/France, 2014  
*In French with English subtitles | Not Rated*

Official site:

<http://www.musicboxfilms.com/alleluia>

Press materials:

<http://www.musicboxfilms.com/alleluia-press>

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## **Festivals and Awards**

Official Selection, Directors' Fortnight – Cannes Film Festival

Official Selection – Karlovy Vary Film Festival

Official Selection – Toronto International Film Festival

Official Selection – Fantastic Fest

WINNER, Fantastic Fest – Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress

Official Selection – Seattle International Film Festival

Official Selection – Nashville Film Festival

WINNER, Grand Jury Award Graveyard Shift – Nashville Film Festival

Official Selection – AFI Film Festival

Official Selection – Chicago International Film Festival

Official Selection – Palm Springs International Film Festival

## **Synopsis**

Based on notorious real-life “lonely hearts killers” who make victims of their romantic liaisons, *Alleluia* is a dark and fascinating love-story-gone-wrong from Belgian horror maverick Fabrice du Welz. Michel (Laurent Lucas, *With a Friend Like Harry* and *Calvaire*) is a born womanizer and professional hustler with a penchant for wooing lonely, vulnerable widows and divorcees. When he meets introverted single mom Gloria (Lola Dueñas, *Volver* and *I'm So Excited!*) online and treats her to an electrifying first date, she's left completely smitten.

Michel tries to swindle what he can out of the one-night stand, but his latest victim has other plans. Basking in the rush of new love, she frantically pursues him, witnessing the true depths of his depravity and offering herself as an accomplice in his seductive crimes. Having truly met their match in each other, the unhinged lovers embark on a deadly odyssey amplified by wild sex, unbridled jealousy, and passionate forays into the dark arts. This smart and gory shocker breathes new life into the lovesick horror genre to serve up a chilling tale of white-hot desperation and terrifying devotion.

## **Short Synopsis**

Michel, a murderous womanizer, meets introverted Gloria online and treats her to a whirlwind one-night-stand. Offering herself as an accomplice in his seductive crimes, the unhinged lovers embark on a deadly odyssey amplified by wild sex, unbridled jealousy, and passionate forays into the dark arts. This smart and gory shocker breathes new life into the lovesick horror genre to serve up a chilling tale of white-hot desperation and terrifying devotion.

## **Logline**

A murderous womanizer and his latest paramour, herself unhinged by desire, embark on a deadly odyssey amplified by wild sex, unbridled jealousy, and passionate forays into the dark arts in this smart, chilling tale from Fabrice du Welz.

## **Behind the Scenes: "From Shocking Headline to Big-Screen Thriller"**

The inspiration for *Alleluia* was a sordid news story that made headlines in the 1940s, the deadly romance of Martha Beck and Raymond Fernandez, known as "The Lonely Hearts Killers."

In January 1949, a strange trio settled down on Long Island in an apartment on Adeline Street. Raymond Fernandez, 34, had just proposed marriage to one of the two women accompanying him, Janet Fay, 66. His other companion, Martha Beck, 28, a former nurse that he was presenting as his sister-in-law, was in reality his mistress. That night, following an argument, Martha smashed Janet's skull in with a hammer. Raymond then finished off his "fiancée" by choking her. This atrocious murder marked the start of the rampage of the so-called "Lonely Hearts Killers."

Fernandez had long practice as a gigolo and swindler, having robbed many lonely women of their savings after answering their classified ads. Martha Beck, who he met in 1947, was one of these women. Due a glandular malformation, Martha struggled with her weight and had difficulty finding stable nursing jobs as well as a lasting companion. As a divorcee and single mother of two children from different fathers, she was an easy target for Fernandez.

Fernandez lived briefly with her, and everywhere they went, Martha declared they were going to get married. But soon her lover left her to return to New York. On a whim, she followed him there and embraced his quirks, while he tolerated her. Head over heels in love, Martha placed her children with the Salvation Army. After Raymond informed her about his swindles, she made the fateful choice to team up with him. In August 1948, Fernandez wed Myrtle Young in Arkansas, all the while Martha striving to prevent their union from consummation. When the new Mrs. Fernandez ended up rebelling, Raymond gave her a strong dose of horse sedatives and abandoned her on a bus on its way to Little Rock. Myrtle died the very next day in a hospital...and from that point on, there would be no turning back for Martha and Raymond, now criminal lovers.

Finally, everything reached a breaking point 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 settled in Downing's home. When the widow began to show signs of doubt, Fernandez gave her sleeping pills. The little girl called out for her mother and cried, and in a towering rage, Martha sexually assaulted her. Fearing Delphine's reaction when she awakened, Fernandez killed her in her sleep. He buried the body in the cellar, and the couple remained for several days in the house while little Rainelle kept calling out for her mother, until Martha finally drowned her in the sink.

On February 28, 1949, alerted by suspicious neighbors, the police showed up just as the two lovers were coming back from the movie theatre and uncovered the two freshly dug graves in the cellar. Under arrest, Raymond and Martha confessed to everything, with all the sordid details. Their confession was no less than 76 pages long. The very next day, the story made the headlines and the newspapers christened them "The Lonely Hearts Killers." Martha emerged as the scapegoat, with her weight and unfortunate appearance highlighted. Given the sensationalism of the case, the Governor of New York convinced the state of Michigan to extradite the criminal lovers, with the outcome that Raymond Fernandez and Martha Beck would face the death penalty.

The trial made waves in the press the entire next summer. On August 22, 1949, at the conclusion of several widely reported weeks of trial, Raymond Fernandez and Martha Beck were finally sentenced to the electric chair. Martha, executed after her lover, faced her fate with self-assurance, defying social standards one last time by claiming that nobody could understand what united her to Raymond. Given her extreme corpulence, her agony lasted several long minutes, before ending a deadly passion which, widely surpassing any work of fiction, continues to inspire novelists and filmmakers alike.



## CREW BIOGRAPHIES

### FABRICE DU WELZ (Director / Co-writer / Co-producer)



A graduate of the Conservatory of Dramatic Art of Liège and INSAS in Brussels, Fabrice du Welz quickly made his entrance into television as a 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) presaged his strong and singular identity.

In 2004, he stood out as a figurehead of genre cinema with *Calvaire* (starring Laurent Lucas, Jackie Berroyer and Philippe Nahon). Presented at the International Critics Week at Cannes, the horror film won the 2005 Jury Prize as well as the International Critics Prize at Gérardmer. Next, he explored the fantastic with a trip to the jungles of Thailand (*Vinyan*, starring Emmanuelle Béart and Rufus Sewell), before launching into the whodunit genre with *Colt 45* (starring Gérard Lanvin and Joey Starr).

In 2013, du Welz worked once again with actor Laurent Lucas for the second episode of an Ardennes trilogy, of which *Calvaire* is the first opus. A free adaptation of a news headline from 1940s America, profiling the "Honeymoon Killers", his latest film *Alleluia* plunges us into the meanderings of destructive passion.

## **CAST BIOGRAPHIES**

### **LARUENT LUCAS (Michel)**

Laurent Lucas entered the National Theatre of Strasbourg in 1993. Quickly, he performed in play after play under the direction of Joël Jouanneau, Jean-Louis Martinelli and Julie Brochen, before being noticed in cinema thanks to the role Laurence Ferreira Barbosa offered him with *I Hate Love* in 1997. He next appeared in *Pola X* and *Haut les coeurs!*, starring Karin Viard and for which he was nominated for a César for Best Hopeful in 2000.

Lucas was 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), who he's working with again in *Lemming* in 2005. He alternated 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), and *La Capture* (2007), as well as leading roles in television films (*Qui sème le vent*, 2011, and *Le Métis de dieu*, 2012).

### **LOLA DUENAS (Gloria)**

Trained under Juan Carlos Corazza, Lola Dueñas' first role was in Salvador García Ruiz's *Mensaka* (1998), which won the Best Actress Prize at the Toulouse Festival and the Best Female Hopeful Prize awarded by Unión de Actores in Spain, literally kick-starting her career.

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 also one of Pedro Almodovar's fetish actresses. After a small part in *Talk to Her* (2002), he offered her a supporting role beside Penélope Cruz in *Volver*, a film crowned with the (collective) Best Actress Award at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival. Three years later, she collaborated 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 appeared in *Suzanne* with François Damians.



## HELENA NOGUERRA (Solange)

With a 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 her well-earned and ascending success with open arms.

Besides releasing her own albums (*Projet bikini*, 1998, *Année zéro*, 2013) and regularly being invited to collaborate on others (Marc Collin and his *Nouvelle Vague*), she made her first timid appearance onto the film scene in 1989 with *La Salle de bain* (directed by John Lvoff) and on television in 1991 with *Les hordes*.

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



## CREDITS

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
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 Emmanuel De Meulemeester
Art director	Florence Scholtes
Costume designer	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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SND

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WILD SIDE

### **About Doppelgänger Releasing**

The new cutting-edge genre label of Music Box Films, Doppelgänger Releasing launched in 2013 and kicked off its slate with EDDIE: THE SLEEPWALKING CANNIBAL, the Cairnes' brothers 100 BLOODY ACRES, and Havana Marking's unconventional documentary SMASH & GRAB. 2014 releases include the outlandish TORRENTE comedies starring Santiago Segura, Arne Toonen's Dutch crime thriller BLACK OUT, and Kiyoshi Kurosawa's suspense series PENANCE.

Music Box Films is a leading distributor of international, American independent, and documentary content in North America. Recent releases include Pawel Pawlikowski's IDA, the 2015 Academy Award®-winner for Best Foreign Language Film; the acclaimed French TV series "Maison Close;" and the Golden Globe-nominated Israeli film GETT: THE TRIAL OF VIVIANE AMSALEM.

Upcoming releases include the Swedish comedy hit THE 100-YEAR OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT THE WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED; Anne Fontaine's romantic comedy GEMMA BOVERY, starring Gemma Arterton and Fabrice Luchini; and MERU, the winner of the U.S. Documentary Audience Award at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates The Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premiere venue for independent and foreign films.