

adopt films

# VICTORIA

a film by SEBASTIAN SCHIPPER  
cinematography by STURLA BRANDTH GRØVLEN  
starring LAIA COSTA • FREDERICK LAU

**Running Time:** 138 minutes

Color

**Language:** English and German w/ English subtitles

***One City • One Night • One Take***

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## **VICTORIA – SYNOPSIS**

*This film is not a movie; it's not about a bank robbery. It is bank robbery. "Victoria" was shot in one single take. Two hours and eighteen minutes. No cuts. No CGI. No cheap tricks. No expensive ones, either. Just one shot.*

Victoria, a young woman from Madrid, meets four local Berliners outside a nightclub. Sonne and his friends promise to show her a good time and the real side of the city. But these lads have gotten themselves into hot water: they owe someone a dangerous favor that requires repaying that evening. As Victoria's flirtation with Sonne deepens into something more, he convinces her to come along for the ride. And later, when things become more ominous and possibly lethally dangerous for Sonne, she *insists* on coming along. As the night takes on an ever more menacing character, what started out as a good time, quickly spirals out of control.

As dawn approaches, Victoria and Sonne address the inevitable: it's all or nothing and they abandon themselves to a heart-stopping race into the depths of hell.

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT (Includes 'Spoilers')**

On April 27th, 2014, we started the camera a little after 4:30 AM in a club we'd built ourselves (in order to keep locations close to each other), and after two hours and eighteen minutes – after we'd run, walked, strolled and climbed through 22 locations, had more than 150 extras handled by six assistant directors, and seven actors followed in succession by three sound crews – we were done – at 6:48 AM. The sun had slowly risen while we filmed, and Laia Costa finally walked away from our cinematographer Sturla Brandth Grøvlen, who looked like he had just run a marathon. Well, he had. We all had.

Why did we do it? It's crazy, A little stupid, too. Well, why do people rob banks? For the money! Of course! But maybe it's not the only reason.

The first thought I ever had about this project was that I realized that in my life I would never rob a bank. And I didn't like the thought. I believe it would be an experience like no other. Not hurting, wounding or even kidnapping people, but to enter a zone – dark and full of fear – to take a gun and demand everything, right away. To receive – not because you deserve it; not because you behaved well or worked hard – but to fast forward and demand it all: Right now! Right here!

Hemingway wanted to shoot an elephant. He knew it was the ultimate sin, but he did it anyway. Or maybe that's why he did it. So, there it was: the idea to rob a bank; and the knowledge that we weren't robbers but filmmakers. But what if we were to shoot the entire film in one single take? The hour before the robbery – and the hour afterwards? That's how we meet the characters, hear their stories, feel their hopes, their despair, their urge to do one defining thing, one thing that will change it all. And also: why is it that there are so many films about bank robberies, and yet so very few that really make you feel the experience?

And isn't that, at heart, what it's really about? Not the robbery. Not a movie about a robbery. Not even a movie about a robbery without a cut. But...the trip.

And the more I think about it, the more I believe that's why we even watch films to begin with: deep down it's not about stories, action, jokes and characters, but about going somewhere and doing the undoable, demanding it all – Right now! Right here!

## **INTERVIEW WITH SEBASTIAN SCHIPPER (More 'Spoilers')**

*Why is Victoria in Berlin, out at a nightclub by herself? Can you introduce your main character and tell us something about her situation?*

Victoria has been a good girl all her life. She followed all the rules and studied hard – but all of a sudden she's left with nothing. After practicing the piano at a Madrid conservatory for sixteen years – seven hours each and every day – she's told that she is not good enough and that she can go home – that she's not needed or wanted anymore. Might she be a model for what can happen to the middle class? That even if we follow the rules, it often seems that the people who actually run things are less and less interested in respecting any kind of rules or moral compass? Maybe. At least I believe this is what she's feeling. Maybe she's not even aware of it – of this deep frustration, this sense of having been done wrong – and at the very same time blaming it all on yourself; and ascribing it to your own lack of talent and dedication – “YOU did not work and try hard enough!” – that really deep down it's somehow your own fault. That is Victoria.

*What inspired the decision to make your heroine a young Spanish woman, a foreigner living in Berlin, rather than a German? Are Victoria and Sonne representative of certain aspects of a quickly changing Berlin?*

In the general narrative Germany is the rich, functioning, straight A student in Europe. Spain does not seem to be on the edge like Greece – but nevertheless, news about young Spanish people left with few to no prospects has become commonplace. These are young people who don't know what to do, where to go, or how to plan a future for themselves. And, indeed, integrating all of these aspects was an influence on the decision to have my lead come from Spain. At the same time I wanted to show that the situation in Germany is also far from being perfect. For young people life is still a huge challenge – especially if you don't come from a privileged background. But above all of those aspects, I was also interested in the unconditional solidarity that young people share between themselves. The default setting seems to be – “I help you. I like you. Who are you. Where are you from?” For me this is very touching, full of hope – and most of all very real, not just a sugary concept.

*How did you cast Laia Costa as Victoria? And how did you end up settling on Frederick Lau (Oh Boy, The Wave) to play Sonne?*

After having an awful call with an extremely snobby casting agent, we were lucky enough to talk to Luci Lenox in Spain. Halfway through the conversation she just said, “Laia Costa.” We asked for a few more names – but as soon as we saw Laia's material we knew – we had found Victoria. For me Freddie Lau is the most exciting actor in Germany right now. He has all the potential to become a Jean Gabin – sometimes I even see some Brando in him. He is a force. He is what cinema is made for – and what true cinema is made of.

*Did you draw from any direct inspirations as far as films about young love, or situations that quickly and dangerously evolve, or characters getting in over their heads? What about movies involving heists or chases through the city?*

No. Not at all. I have never been further away from “being inspired” by another film than I was with “Victoria.” Because there really is no reference point. A film in one single take? Not the ‘make believe’ kind, but actually doing it? Beyond that one of our very first ideas was not to create a ‘me too’ film. We didn't want to climb a tree that thousands had climbed before us – a safe tree! Most films that we see yearn after their own idols – every other Mafia film wants to be “The Godfather.” “The Bourne Identity” has many offspring. But we weren't even thinking about ‘the movie’ in the first place. We wanted to create an experience – for the audience – but to do that the first step was to create it for us. For the actors. At times we

even approached the film as a side product of the experience we created. And in some way we also knew we had to neglect the “product” in order to produce something that had its own unique taste, small, feel.

*What are some of the impressions or vibrations of Berlin that you hope shine through in your film?*

I have no ambition to sell Berlin to anybody. I love the city. For me it's the best place in the world. But I am not on a mission. At the same time – is Berlin the perfect stage for this story? Yes. Absolutely. For me this city is still the definition of “right here, right now.”

*Why make this film in one shot and not a simpler, more traditional shoot? Is this a reaction to the current state of filmmaking and CGI where the impossible is almost commonplace?*

Being against something is a motivation that won't get you far – or to any good place. I would rather try to find something worth fighting for. You know, I don't mind people playing “candy crush”...well, that's a lie. I hate it. Probably because I myself am always in danger of wasting my time on things like that...how can I say this best...OK, one of my all-time favorite quotes: “But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin,” Aldous Huxley, ‘Brave New World.’ That's the movies! That's cinema! That's why we go. But most of the time all that we see presented is ‘comfort.’ More and more and more. “Victoria” is no candy crush. It's poetry, danger, freedom and sin.

*Was the script as perfectly precise and choreographed as the shoot had to be? Or did your narrative and story evolve as you worked on the film – whether in development, pre-production or during the shoot itself?*

There was no script. We had twelve pages. Scenes, locations and general actions of the characters were written down. Everything else, and especially dialogue, was improvised. But at the same time this description does not really capture what we did at all. Since we shot the film in one take – and, yes, we did it more than once – we were able to see the (complete) film very early on. So we had the chance (and the challenge) to develop the ideas, the characters, the plot, the motivations much earlier than in a classic setup. We ‘cooked’ right there, right then – on a super hot plate. Because we knew all the decisions had to be taken then executed at that very moment – and – most of all – that they were final. The panic, the fear, the adrenaline, the endless euphoria when we knew we did it – so, yes, it's more than a smart quote to say “This film is not a movie; it's not about a bank robbery. It is bank robbery.” We earned that quote.

*How did you rehearse for this film? Was everything exhaustively prepared and executed perfectly, or was leaving room for improvisation also part of the plan?*

Both. Neither. I don't want to go into too much detail but, yes, nothing has to be rehearsed as precisely as an improvisation does.

*How did you manage to juggle all of the action and different locations, while at the same time directing your actors and insuring that the crew was handling the technical aspects of the production?*

I don't know. Honesty, as I look back and remember the time of the shoot, it was the one time in my life that I felt a complete loss of control – which is not so much fun for directors. We are used to control, and we like to micromanage the degree to which an actor smiles, moves her hands, or to what extent his whisper has a touch of his real voice, or whether it's voiceless and barely audible. We have them redo these things to a point where they forget not only what the scene or the film is about – but where they were born. But here? All of that was

gone. Completely, Gone. Helpless. No impact. So instead I had to learn to talk like a coach. I only had the halftime period of fifteen minutes. So did we experience these classic moments when the coach gives the locker room speech, questioning whether the players have an ounce of any kind of pride left in them, or if the disgrace he witnessed is really all they have to offer this game, the world, their lives? Well, I'd rather let you be the judge of that.

*The music is very evocative. Can you tell us what brought you to collaborate with composer Nils Frahm?*

Honestly, I had the luck of the fool that goes out for a stroll and finds some gold – except better: because somebody – my music supervisor, that is – hands him the gold brick and says “Here you go!” Fool: “Not sure I’ll really have any use for that.” Supervisor: “Well, keep it for a while and you’ll see.”

## **SEBASTIAN SCHIPPER (Director)**

Sebastian Schipper joined his first theatre group at the age of 16 and began studying to become an actor at the Otto Falckenberg School in Munich shortly after completing his A-levels. Employment at Munich's Kammerspeile Theater followed his studies where he simultaneously wrote and directed his first short films and ultimately his first feature-length film, "Absolute Gigantic," produced by Tom Tykwer and X-Films. The film "Ein Freund von mir" ("A Friend of Mine"), with Daniel Brühl and Jürgen Vogel followed in 2004, and in 2008 "Mitte Ende August" ("Sometime in August"), an adaptation of Goethe's Elective Affinities with Marie Bäumer and Milan Paschel. Since Sebastian played one of the leads in Tykwer's film "3," he has had a steady stream of roles. In 2013 he established the production company MonkeyBoy with Jan Dressler. Their first feature under this company, "Victoria" was selected for Competition at the 2015 Berlinale.

### Writer/Director Filmography

2015 VICTORIA  
2008 MITTE ENDE AUGUST  
2004 EIN FREUND VON MIR  
1998 ABSOLUTE GIGANTEN

### Actor Filmography (Selected)

2013 I AM HERE (Dir. Anders Morgenthaler)  
2011 LUDWIG II (Dir. Peter Sehr)  
2009 DREI (Dir. Tom Tykwer)  
2004 DIE NACHT SINGT IHRE LIEDER (Dir. Romuald Karmakar)  
1997 LOLA RENNT (Dir. Tom Tykwer)

## **JAN DRESSLER (Producer)**

Jan Dressler began his career in 1991 as a runner. He began producing TV commercials in 1994 and, in 2014, joined Iconoclast as Executive Producer and Partner. In 2013, together with Sebastian Schipper, he founded MonkeyBoy as a vehicle for joint feature film projects. He has worked with directors including Daniel Barber, Adam Berg, Martin Krejci, Ridley Scott, Sebastian Schipper, Ralf Schmerberg and Peter Thwaites.

Dressler has produced advertisements for clients such as Coca-Cola, Hornbach, Nike, Deutsche Bank, Mercedes Benz, BMW, Audi and Deutsche Telekom. His work has won international awards from Clio (Gold), D&AD, LIA, Mobius and ADC Europe.

VICTORIA is his first feature film.

## **NILS FRAHM (Composer)**

Nils Frahm had an early introduction to music. During his childhood he was taught to play piano. It was through this that Nils began to immerse himself in the styles of the classical pianists before him as well as contemporary composers.

Today Nils works as an accomplished composer and producer from his Berlin-based Durton Studio. His unconventional approach to an age-old instrument, played contemplatively and ultimately, has won him many fans around the world. For a musician this early in his career, Frahm displays an incredibly developed sense of control and restraint in his work, catching the ear of many fans.

As the recognition continues to grow for his previous solo piano works 'Wintermusik' (2009) and 'The Bells' (2009), 2011 saw the release of his critically acclaimed record 'Felt.' The album was followed by the solo synthesizer EP 'Juno' and 'Screws' (2012) – a birthday gift to his fans he recorded while recovering from a thumb injury. Nils released his follow-up to 'Juno' titled 'Juno Reworked' (2013) with guest reworks by Luke Abbott and Clark.

## **THE PLAYERS**



### **LAIA COSTA (Victoria)**

After finishing her studies with a PhD in Political Science and Media Studies from the University of Barcelona, Laia Costa began taking acting classes with Nancy Tuñón.

In her debut performance on the Spanish TV series BANDOLERA, broadcast on Madrid based Antena 3, she portrayed a young woman who suffers sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather and conceives a child. At the same time Laia appeared on other shows including TOLEDO, TIEMPO ENTRE COSTURAS and RED RIDING HOOD. A small part in TENGO GANAS DE TI (Dir. Fernando G. Molina, 2012) marked her debut on the big screen.

After returning to her hometown of Barcelona, Laia received an offer from Pau Freixas to join the cult series POLSERES VERMELLES, a show now being remade for FOX by DreamWorks as THE RED BAND SOCIETY. Her performance as Rym, a charismatic young girl diagnosed with breast cancer, earned her rave reviews from both fans and critics.

Always looking for new challenges, Laia made her theatre debut at the National Theatre of Catalonia in the play KILLING, BEATING AND DEATH IN AGBANASPACH, written and directed by Marcel Borrás and Nao Albet – and gave her entire performance in German.

As well as playing VICTORIA in 2014, she also shot FORT ROSS by Russian filmmaker Yury Morozov and won the Spotlight Breakthrough Acting Award 2014 at the Subtitle Film Festival, Kilkenny, Ireland. Laia recently completed work in Fernando G. Molina's new film PALMS IN THE SNOW.

### **FREDERICK LAU (Sonne)**

Frederick Lau was born in 1989 in Berlin. He was just ten years old when he first appeared on-screen, and since then he has been making a name for himself as an actor with roles in over 50 German and international productions.

Among the many awards he has received are the German Film Award for Best Supporting Actor for his breakthrough performance in Dennis Gansel's box office hit THE WAVE (2008), as well as the Grimme Award and the Bavarian Television Award for his lead role in Hermine's Huntgeburth's NEW VAHR SOUTH (2010).

He has appeared in feature films including Julie Delpy's THE COUNTESS (2009) and Philip Koch's highly-acclaimed youth drama PICCO (2009). The young actor also remains a familiar face on television, having appeared in numerous German crime series and TV films.

Lau will soon appear in Oskar Roehler's DEATH TO HIPPIES, LONG LIVE PUNK.

### **FRANZ ROGOWSKI (Boxer)**

Franz Rogowski was born in 1986 in Freiburg. He started his career as a dancer, working in theatres including Thalia Theater in Hamburg and Schaubühne Berlin, appearing in pieces directed by Falk Richter, Nikolas Stemann, and others. Director Jakob Lass discovered him as an actor and gave him leading parts in many of his movies. Their film LOVE STEAKS (2013) earned Rogowski the Best Actor award at the Munich Film Festival. He has appeared in TV productions directed by Angelina Maccarone and Ingo Rasper, and recently finished shooting the upcoming LIMBO (2015, Dir. Henri Steinmetz), in which he plays the lead role opposite Angela Winkler.

### **BURAK YIGIT (Blinker)**

Born in 1986 in Berlin-Kreuzberg, Burak Yigit first demonstrated his talent as a stage actor in 2006, before starting to work on television and film. *STRONGER THAN BLOOD* (2010, Dir. Oliver Kienle) earned him a Bavarian Film Award in 2011 as well as the Max Ophüls Prize for Best Young Actor. His many other film credits include the Berlinale Competition selection *SHAHADA* (2013, Dir. Cüneyt Kaya), *DR. KETEL* (2011, Dir. Linus de Paoli), *WESTERLAND* (2012, Dir. Tim Staffell), *UMMAH – UNTER FREUNDEN* (2013 Dir. Cüneyt Kaya) and *HABIB RHAPSODY* (2013, Dir. Michael Baumann). Burak continues to work in German TV and on stage, appearing at the Staatstheater Wiesbaden, the Habel-Theater, HAU and Heimathafen Neukölln in Berlin.

### **MAX MAUFF (Fuss)**

Max Mauff was 14 when he took on his first leading role in Kai Wessels' *DAS JAHR DER SSE* (2001). Since then he has been recognized for playing characters such as Alex, alongside Corinna Harfouch and techno DJ Paul Kalkbrenner in Hannes Stohr's *BERLIN CALLING* (2008), and Kevin in the award-winning film *THE WAVE* (2008), by Dennis Gansel. He also starred as the lead in *ABSURDISTAN*, his first international production, shot in Azerbaijan and directed by Veit Helmer, winning awards for his work at film festivals in Zimbabwe and in France. Other credits include *THE READER* (2008) by Stephen Daltry. In addition to his work for German radio, and in the cult TV comedy *STROMBERG* (2012), he was also featured in the movie based on the TV show: *STROMBERG – THE MOVIE* (2013, Dir. Arne Feldhusen), After starring as the lead in *HANNA'S JOURNEY* (2013, Dir. Julia von Heinz) and *PATONG GIRL* (2013, Dir. Susanna Salonen), he recently collaborated with Tom Tykwer in the Netflix series *SENSE 8*.

## CAST (In Order of Appearance)

Victoria	Laia Costa
Barkeeper	Eike Frederick Schulz
Sonne	Frederick Lau
Bouncer 1	Kamer Senel
Bouncer 2	Reza Jadgarieb
Blinker	Burak Yigit
Boxer	Franz Rogowski
Fuss	Max Mauff
Kiosk Vendor	Adolfo Assor
Short Haired Hooligan	Jan Breustedt
Long Haired Hooligan	David Micas
Andi	André M. Hennicke
Undercover Cop #1	Timo Honsa
Undercover Cop #2	Bernd Weikert
Young Father	Philipp Kubitzka
Young Mother	Anna Lena Klenke
Special Forces #1	Martin Goeres
Special Forces #2	Andreas Schmittka
Cab Driver	Hans Ulrich Laux
Receptionist	Maria Lellek

## CREW

Director	Sebastian Schipper
Director of Photography	Sturla Brandth Grøvlen, DFF
Written by	Sebastian Schipper Olivia Neergaard-Holm Eike Schulz
Music	Nils Frahm
Producers	Jan Dressler Sebastian Schipper Anatol Nitschke Catherine Baikousis David Keitsch
Co-Producers	Dr. Barbara Buhl Andreas Schreitmüller
1 <sup>st</sup> Assistant Director	Ires Jung
Production Manager	Steffen Leiser
Location Manager	Toni Jaschke
Production Designer	Uli Friedrichs
Sound Recording	Magnus Pflüger
Casting	Suse Marquardt, Lucie Lenox & Iris Müller
Costume Designer	Stefanie Jauss
Sound Designer	Fabian Schmitt
Sound Mixer	Matthias Lempert