

A FANTASTIC WOMAN (Una Mujer Fantástica)

Chile (2017) 104 minutes

Director: Sebastián Lelio

Cast: Daniela Vega (Marina), Francisco Reyes (Orlando),
Luis Gnecco (Gabo), Aline Kuppenheim (Sonia)



Screening 11 September 2019 at Swindon Arts Centre

Synopsis

Marina, a young waitress and aspiring singer, and her older lover, Orlando, are planning for the future. After celebrating Marina's birthday together, Orlando is taken ill and rushed to hospital where he passes away. Instead of being able to mourn her lover, Marina is treated with suspicion by Orlando's family and by the authorities who investigate the circumstances of his death.

Reviews



Sebastián Lelio's Oscar-winning film ***A Fantastic Woman*** is a sublime study in the exalted ordeal of grief. It is also as gripping as any procedural crime thriller, and cops and police doctors do play a role ...

... It is a wonderful performance from the 28-year-old trans actor Daniela Vega: passionate, intelligent and with a certain understated dignity. She is rarely absent from the screen and Lelio's camera seems always to be catching her character in the act of transcending loneliness, heroically defusing the internal opera of pain, rising above the thousand petty little indignities and hostilities that the world now wishes to add to the ordinary agony of her bereavement ...

... The emotional and political issues at stake here turn on the adjective in the title. Glorious or inauthentic? Sensational or fake? Fabulous or fabular?

Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

... Early sequences work to establish the relaxed intimacy of the couple's relationship ...

... But from the moment Orlando suffers an aneurysm 12 minutes into the film, everything changes. Marina, a trans woman, is shut out of his affairs by both his family and by the authorities: framed peering through the window of the hospital emergency room where Orlando is being treated; left standing in a space designated an 'área sucia' (dirty area); made to leave the apartment she shared with Orlando; confronted and thrown out of his wake at the pointedly titled Church of the Sacred Family ...

... Daniela Vega's performance as Marina is both luminous and contained. "Always so mysterious," her boss at the restaurant observes, and Marina carries her grief with dignity, composure and self-control. To those who address her by her birth name Daniel, she defiantly responds: "My name is Marina." It's a line she repeats on numerous occasions to all those who refuse to accept who she is ...

Marina Delgado, Sight & Sound

Film Facts

- Won the 2018 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film.
- Daniela Vega was originally approached by the Director, Sebastián Lelio, as a consultant while he was carrying out research about the transgender community in Chile. After learning of her personal experiences, he gave her the role.
- Daniela Vega's own voice - mezzo soprano - is heard in the film singing the opera pieces.