



NEXT GENERATION

Introducing Dominik Garcia-Lorido

INTERVIEW BY OMAR SOMMEREYNS

PORTRAITS BY BETH HERZHAFT

Because she is Andy Garcia's daughter — and has already worked with him in two feature films — it's easy to perceive Dominik Garcia-Lorido's career in the context of her father's influence. But as the Academy Award-nominated actor points out, his eldest child has been in love with the craft since she was a wee kid. "That's what she wanted to do — there never was an alternative," he recently told *FIM*, calling in from Los Angeles. "And there's nothing you can do for any actor other than open a door for them. I have absolutely no control after that. It's only her art, what she accomplishes on her own, that speaks for itself."

Born in Miami and raised in the San Fernando Valley in southern California, Garcia-Lorido has been acting since she was five, first on the stage and later appearing in 10 independent films, including her role as a college student-turned-stripper (alongside her real-life father, who, incidentally, also plays her father in the film) in 2009's *City Island*, which won her an Imagen Award for Best Supporting Actress. With beautifully expressive, angular looks, Garcia-Lorido retains a coolheaded demeanor as she takes her acting career one constructive step at a time. Anticipating upcoming roles in Matthew Bonifacio's *Not for Nothing* and *Magic City Memoirs*, a homegrown film — premiering this month at the Miami International Film Festival — about private school kids struggling with adolescent vices, in which she plays the sheltered daughter of the mayor of Coral Gables, *FIM* caught up with the 27-year-old actress to talk about her love of filmmaking, the power of good writing, and her soft spot for Frankie Valli.

FIM: What was your childhood like? Was growing up with your father's career in the background a big influence?

DGL: My dad was working on location a lot, so when we were pulled out of school, we'd be tutored there. But being on set was great — we hung out in the makeup trailer, put on fake blood and bruises, and I also used to go watch dailys with my dad. We were very involved in his workspace, and so I had a hands-on education in moviemaking. When I got older, I would voluntarily go visit him and watch how directors would work, and I just started getting more into it. I've always been drawn to storytelling, especially with old movies when I was a kid. I was obsessed with *Gone with the Wind* and *The Glass Bottom Boat*. I find movies so absorbing and love to get lost in them.

FIM: How was the experience of working with your father on both *The Lost City* and *City Island*?

DGL: Those were two completely different experiences. In the first, he was my director and in the other he was my acting partner. I was 20 when we were doing *The Lost City*. I had only done theater up to that point, but he was such a good director and knew just how to trigger me and help me get to where he wanted me to go emotionally. I was very proud of him. In *City Island*, I tried to focus on myself because it was the biggest part I had played, and I really wanted to do a good job and not fall behind. I mean, in terms of a father-and-daughter relationship, the circumstances of the film were so bizarre and so far-fetched from anything I had to deal with in real life with my dad [laughs]. But at that point, I was 25 and I had a lot more experience so I felt more comfortable in my skin.

FIM: What do you love most about the filmmaking process?

"I don't know what I would do without acting, and the heavier the subject, the more the release for me."

DGL: I love filmmaking because it is a collaborative effort. Movies are not just about the actors, or the director, or the cinematographer — everyone is so equal on set, and it's such a team effort. You can't have an overriding ego, although it definitely exists, but that causes a lot of conflict. It's just great because you can't get it done without one another, so it's like a family.

FIM: Does acting come naturally to you?

DGL: I work really hard for it. I was very shy growing up, and I was scared to be judged. But then there was this whole epiphany when I was in my teens, and being on stage became so authentic to me. It was where I could be most honest and vulnerable, and I found that very liberating — a place for me to break down and let it all out. I don't know what I would do without it, and the heavier the subject, the more the release for me.

FIM: How did you get involved in *Magic City Memoirs*?

DGL: When I got the script, my first thought was, 'Oh, another cheesy movie about Miami,' but then I read it and we talked about how it should be executed, how it should be real and gritty, and I liked that. Living in Miami like a local rather than a tourist or visitor is really different. I think the city's been cheesed up by the media, but the filmmakers wanted to show the real Miami. I also didn't meet the director, Aaron [Salgado], until the first day of shooting — and I've been in situations with indies where the director is crazy, going through three different DPs or whatever — but I really liked the way he dealt with me and the other actors. It was also really fun working with people of my own age. Not many young actors get to experience making a film with an all-young cast...you're usually the youngest on set, but this was really fun.

FIM: Do you relate to your character?

DGL: Yeah, like my character, I've lived a protected life, and my parents were strict growing up. Her dad, like mine, is in the public eye, and wants to protect his daughter. And the naiveté she has was very close to me too.

FIM: You're currently based in LA, but what's your impression of Miami?

DGL: I love the boat life, and when you're away, you realize that kind of lifestyle is really unique there. It's an amazing thing. I also miss the Cuban culture, but the thing is, Miami is a big city with a small town feel — like a bubble where everyone's knows your business and it's hard to separate yourself from that. When I leave, it's like I have a remote and press stop, and then when I get back, I press play again. Artistically, it's not stimulating ▷



Above and opposite: Actress Dominik Garcia-Lorido has two movies scheduled for release this year, including *Magic City Memoirs* (above, on set), which premieres at the Miami International Film Festival on March 11.



Above: Besides acting, Garcia-Lorido is a music lover, and a "huge oldies fan."

enough for me, there's something missing, although there's no reason why it should be like that since there are so many different influences there. Maybe it's because people don't get out of that bubble, and don't leave to expose themselves to the rest of the world.

FIM: Moving forward, do you see yourself gravitating more to commercial projects or art-house/indie films?

DGL: I'll gravitate to good writing, whether it's from a studio or an independent producer. But the industry is at a really weird place right now. Movies made in the late '60s or '70s like *Midnight Cowboy* would not be done by the studios today and it's so sad because actors really want to do good material. Even the biggest actors can't make the movies they want. Either they're doing the big \$100 million franchise movies, which have a surefire following, or really low-budget films, where you may be changing wardrobe under a tree or something [laughs]. So there's no middle ground, those \$20 million movies with an amazing cast and story. My dad's been a producer for years so I've witnessed it. A lot of good actors are going

to TV, where now there's really good material. As an actor, you're only as good as the writing. I'm actually auditioning at pilot season right now.

FIM: Tell us something about yourself that people may not know.

DGL: I'm really into oldies. I mean, I like all kinds of music, but I'm a huge oldies fan — '50s, '60s, Frankie Valli and all that. I have an appreciation for older things, whether it's music, fashion, or film. I'm a very nostalgic person, and I don't like letting go of things.

FIM: Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?

DGL: Definitely still acting, and hopefully producing my own stuff. I think producing is an exciting process, especially being in control of my own projects. I also love helping kids and charity work. I just feel like it's so unfair when children are deprived of their childhood, so I hope to have my own charity at some point too.

Magic City Memoirs premieres at 6:45pm on March 11 at the Gusman Center, 174 East Flagler Street, Miami, during the Miami International Film Festival. For tickets/more info: 305/405-6433, miamifilmfestival.com □

OPENING CREDITS

This year's edition of the Miami International Film Festival features a new director and its most ambitious program to date

Now in its 28th year, the Miami International Film Festival (MIFF) has certainly come a long way, showcasing more than 100 films from 40 countries, March 4-13. "It has evolved from a Miami society event to a more internationally-competitive, industry-based showcase," says current festival director Jaie Laplante. "It has also expanded the majority of its activities onto Miami Beach."

Always a highlight are the Gusman Galas, with this year's Opening Night (March 4) featuring *Chico & Rita*, a sultry, animated love story between a Cuban band leader and his sexy chanteuse directed by Fernando Trueba and Barcelona designer Javier Mariscal. There's also French director François Ozon's new film, *Potiche* (March 5), starring Gérard Depardieu and Catherine Deneuve, Canadian director Denis Villeneuve's *Incendies* (March 12), nominated for a 2011 Oscar for Best Foreign-Language Film, Philip Stölz's *Young Goethe in Love* (March 10), a historical drama chronicling the early years of Germany's literary genius, and the world premiere of Mario van Peebles' *Things Fall Apart* (March 5), starring famed rapper Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson.

Incisive Danish filmmaker Susanne Bier — who notably directed the cutting family drama, *After the Wedding* — will be honored on March 6, with a screening of her latest release, *In a Better World* (which won a Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film and was nominated for an Oscar as of press time), about two young boys dealing with familial problems and lashing out violently. "When I saw her new film, I was convinced that 2011 was going to be the year she was recognized on a broader scale," says Laplante. "She is an incredible artist, and I find her to be a great humanist as well. What I especially like about her work is the way she locates characters who find themselves in places of heavy dilemma in their lives, and how she brings to the surface all the contradictory feelings that can tear at a person from within."

New this year is the CinemaSlam, a Miami film school competition, and a revamped documentary program (renamed "Doc-You-Up") with a seminar featuring Oscar nominee Morgan Spurlock (March 8) — who challenged McDonald's in *Super Size Me* and is taking on branding/product placement issues in *The Greatest Movie Ever Sold* — and several screenings, including *Project Nim* (March 7,10), a documentary by James Marsh (who won an Oscar for *Man on Wire*), about the Columbia University experiment to discover how humans and chimps could communicate through sign language.

And as always, the Ibero-diaspora focus makes this festival

quite unique, where viewers can see new films coming out of Spain, Portugal and all of Latin America for the first time, such as Argentinean director Alejo Taube's *Water and Salt* (March 5,7,13). Plus, don't miss industry seminars featuring both up-and-coming and established filmmakers, and special events like the El Coto de Rioja Paella Parade on March 9, celebrating the Spanish films at the festival with various paella dishes from top Miami restaurants.

PIANO IN THE FACTORY



POTICHE



MIFF has gone through several directors throughout the years, but organizers seem galvanized by the recent appointment of Jaie Laplante, who once acted in a controversial film about a gay serial killer titled *Frisk*, and was formerly heading the South Beach Wine & Food Festival and the Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. Says Juan Mendieta, spokesperson for Miami Dade College, which produces MIFF. "Even with the changes in the last decade, we are confident Jaie Laplante will bring stability to the beloved festival for many years to come and is committed to taking this cultural gem to new heights." — Omar Sommereyns

The Miami International Film Festival takes place March 4-13.
For information: 305/405-6433. www.miamifilmfestival.com. □