



*World Wide
Motion Pictures Corporation*

PRESENTS

APPLAUSE

Sometimes life is the hardest performance of all

A Koncern Film

Directed by Martin Pieter Zandvliet

Screenplay by Anders Frithiof August and Martin Pieter Zandvliet

Produced by Mikael Christian Rieks

Starring:

Paprika Steen

Michael Falch

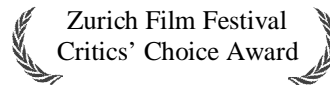
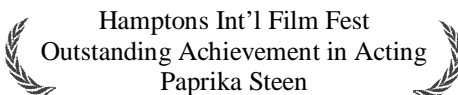
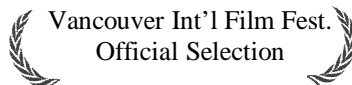
Sara-Marie Maltha

Shanti Roney

Malou Reymann

Uffe Rørbaek

85 minutes. In Danish with English subtitles.



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SYNOPSIS

Recovering alcoholic stage actress, Thea Barfoed (Paprika Steen) has gone through turmoil. Having divorced her husband, Christian (Michael Falch), and relinquished custody of their two boys during her heavy drinking days, Thea wants to start over. As her past alcohol use and indiscretions still haunt her, the reality of a new beginning seems bleak. Thea uses her inner actress's charm and manipulation to convince her ex-husband that she is fully recovered and capable of being a good mother to their children; however, she hasn't completely convinced herself.

On stage, Thea plays the binge drinking, ostentatious Martha in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" Ironically, her stage character bears an uncanny resemblance to her personal life. As her alcoholism and past regrets hang in the balance, Thea must decide whether to confront her inner demons or to let the show go on.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

For me "Applause" is about betrayal. About how we as human beings betray the ones closest to us, when we ourselves have been betrayed. About having difficulties trusting other people and judging what is right and wrong. About the complexity of longing for something better. About reacting extremely egocentric or extremely helpful, about varying between despondency/discouragement and spite. All in hope of being seen, heard and loved.

- Director Martin Pieter Zandvliet

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

On stage, Thea plays Martha, the aggressive and wounded, alcoholic wife in “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” Off stage, the actress is trapped in a drama that has many of the same tragic, toxic ingredients. A recovering alcoholic, Thea is struggling to win joint custody of her two young sons. However, neither her boys nor her ex-husband – and probably, at heart, not even herself – really believes she is truly reformed and dry. Thea is Thea, a *prima donna* better suited to acting her heart out than living an ordinary life.

Paprika Steen stars in the pivotal role of Thea. An internationally respected actress, Steen is best known for her performance in Thomas Vinterberg’s “The Celebration” (1998), while in Denmark she has long been a leading star of stage and screen.

“Applause” features authentic footage from a production of “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” at a Copenhagen theatre, where Steen won raves as the restless, wounded shrew – the role that Uga Hagen in the original Broadway production and Elizabeth Taylor in the film of the classic Edward Albee play, made a rite of passage for actresses dedicated to scaling the heights of their craft.

“Paprika Steen was always the key element,” Martin Pieter Zandvliet says. “From the beginning, we wanted her for the role. It was written directly for her. She’s a very upfront, spontaneous person. She says what others only dare to think.”

“I hate ordinary people!” Steen says, as Thea, then immediately recants, though without much conviction, “Oh, they’re alright.”

ECHOES OF CASSAVETES

“Applause”’s unusual mixture of film and theatre was not initially conceived as a key element in the 38-year-old director’s first film. It was an experiment. “Let’s see if it works,” the film’s creative team told each other. “My main worry was that it would seem contrived,” Zandvliet says.

The shots of the live performance at the theatre focus exclusively on Steen. Her fellow actors aren’t even in the frame. It’s a pure power move, acting at its raw best. The stage sequences give the film a documentary edge, and Steen ends up performing in an unusual hall of mirrors. She is an actress, masterfully and bravely plying her craft on stage. She is a diva in the dressing room, bullying her wardrobe assistant and bitterly scrutinizing time’s ravaging march across her face. And she is plain Thea, desperately trying to get her life back on track by acting the most difficult part of all: that of a completely ordinary, responsible person.

The spirit of “Applause” has echoes of John Cassavetes, according to Zandvliet. Indeed the director reveres Cassavetes’ gift for raw, seemingly spontaneous human drama. Writing the part for Steen was directly inspired by Gena Rowlands’ appearances in Cassavetes’ films. In fact, Zandvliet even considered the possibility of persuading Rowlands to act in his film, but the idea was dropped.

A MODERATE BUDGET, A HIGHER CEILING

Zandvliet, a former surfer who chased waves around the world for 15 years, now had to navigate the choppy waters of the film world. It's not easy for a self-taught editor and director to break into film. He and his producer, Mikael Rieks of Koncern Film, originally applied to New Danish Screen for funds to make a 50-minute film. This DFI subsidy scheme is for new directors and experimental projects. The budgets are low, but the artistic ceiling is high. Moreover, New Danish Screen, one of Europe's leading Film Funds, has a precedent of promoting medium-length fiction projects to full-length features if the material and potential are right. That's what happened to "Applause."

"I think they were very careful not to pressure me. They wanted me to pursue my ideas in my own way. That was the most important thing," Zandvliet says. He was first introduced to the world of film 13 years ago when he dated a cinematographer, Camilla Hjelm Knudsen. At the time, his only experience was filming surfing competitions. While in New York, he realized that film editing was a good place for him to start. He and Hjelm Knudsen made a film, "Angels of Brooklyn," and he later had a breakthrough of sorts when he cut "Rocket Brothers," a documentary about the Danish rock band Kashmir. Then he started writing — writing up a storm and inching towards the dream of directing.

GOOD ACTING RATHER THAN A GOOD STORY

At a time when Hollywood is overwhelmed by superheroes and CGI special effects, and genre films dominate the movie industry, "Applause" is clearly coming from a different place entirely — from another tradition that seems almost forgotten, a cinematic tradition centering on the human soul and on acting that is less about effects and more about what moves us.

"As I see it, I'm making a stand for films of a past age — an age I hope will return," Zandvliet says. "The subjects Cassavetes and Bob Fosse took up were carried by a much greater faith in the characters and more love for them. I love the depth of a Cassavetes film. A single glance or frame makes me feel so much more than the fast cutting almost everyone uses today." "Applause" is a change of pace from ubiquitous, frantic fast cutting. Per Sandholt, who edited "Applause," was asked to hold the cuts for as long as the acting held up.

"Personally, I fall completely in love if I can get the actors to play well. I'd almost rather have really good acting than a good story or an effective plot," Zandvliet says. Cassavetes, in his day, gathered his own tight "film family" around him. You sense something similar in the trio of Zandvliet, his co-writer Anders Frithiof August, and his producer Mikael Rieks. Rieks' partner is Paprika Steen. Their son Otto plays one of Thea's sons in the film. Technicians swapped hats, and the actors read over each other's shoulders.

THE WORN STAGE OF GREAT FACES

"Applause" is not a film about alcoholism, but alcohol is still a big part of it. Michael Falch, who plays the male lead, Christian, is a real-life recovering alcoholic. The lines in his face are so deep they look like they were put there with an axe. Steen's diminutive facial craters do not escape scrutiny either. This is not traditional beautification but intimate theatre on the worn stage of great faces. "There's a consensus in movies that women should be pretty and that beauty consists in having no flaws," Zandvliet observes. "But I think women are more interesting when you can tell they have lived life," he

says. “It’s okay to show some cellulite, not that I’m out to spotlight anything unattractive. I just think it’s much more beautiful when you see the scars. Showing life adds character. Paprika Steen, like Gena Rowlands, only gets more beautiful up close”.

Excerpts by Kim Skotte, Danish cultural writer and film critic, President of the Board of Filmedarbejderforeningen, a guild of Copenhagen film reporters which gives out the annual Bodil Award.

Published in the Danish Film institute magazine FILM#66 May 2009

CAST BIOGRAPHIES



PAPRIKA STEEN (Thea)

Paprika Steen was born in Denmark to musician and conductor Niels Jørgen Steen and actress Avi Sagild. She is the sister of musician and actor Nikolaj Steen. As a teen, she started her career performing on stage in various contemporary stage productions and has been associated with the Royal Danish Theatre since 1997. That same year, she wrote and performed in the satirical television series “Lex og Klatten,” which became a TV and music classic in Denmark. In 1998,

Steen became an active participant in the internationally acclaimed Dogme 95 film movement as the only performer to appear in the first three movies: Lars Von Trier’s “The Idiots,” “The Celebration” by Thomas Vinterberg, and Søren Kragh-Jacobsen’s “Mifune’s Last Song” and most recently, Susanne Bier’s “Open Hearts.” She is often referred to as the Dogme Queen. Steen won her first Bodil Award as the Best Supporting Actress in 2000 for “The One and Only.” In 2002, she won the Bodil Award, the Robert Award, the Oscar equivalent of Denmark, and American Film Institute’s Grand Jury Prize for her leading role as the controlling loudmouth Nete in “Okay”. She was also nominated for the prestigious European Film award for the role of Nete. The same year she also won both the Bodil and Robert Awards as Best Supporting Actress in Susanne Bier’s “Open Hearts.” Steen is the first actress/actor who has ever won the Robert and the Bodil in both categories the same year. Steen also received a lot of attention and nominations for the role as the alien substitute teacher in Ole Bornedal’s “The Substitute.” Steen made her directorial debut with the 2004 drama “Aftermath” about the emotional trauma of a young couple after the death of their daughter. The film was screened in the main competition at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in the Czech Republic and received awards at several other film festivals, including the Lübeck Nordic Film Days (Lübeck, Germany) and the Film by the Sea International Festival (Vlissingen, Netherlands). In 2007, Steen directed her second feature, the comedy “With Your Permission,” which was screened at the Toronto Film festival Discovery Section. One of Steen’s biggest triumphs on the Danish stage was her sensational, critically acclaimed 2008 performance as Martha in Edward Albee’s “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” Steen lives in Denmark.



MICHAEL FALCH (Christian)

Michael Falch is a Danish rock singer/songwriter and a part-time actor. Beginning in 1980, he sang in the famous Danish rock band Malurt, with whom he performed with Bruce Springsteen in 1981. Throughout three decades he has been a major songwriter and performing artist in the rock music business of Denmark with more than 20 album releases, two books and a string of hits with status as classics. He made his debut as an actor in 1983 in Søren Kragh Jacobsens “Isfugle,” which gave Falch a

Bodil Award nomination. Three years later, he achieved a Bodil for his lead role in “Mord i Mørket” (“Murder in the Dark”), and he has since occasionally performed in films and TV series such as the Emmy-winning “Rejseholdet” (“Unit One”).



SARA-MARIE MALTHA (Maiken)

Sara-Marie Maltha graduated from both The School of the Science of Acting in London and Lee Strassberg Institute in London and New York. Maltha stayed in London, where she made her film debut in 1997 in the English comedy drama “Movertime” (BBC). Subsequently, she worked on several English theatre and independent film productions. Maltha achieved her international breakthrough in 2005 in the drama “Return to Sender,” where she played opposite Aidan Quinn, Kelly

Preston, and Connie Nielsen. Maltha lives in Denmark, where she is best known for her roles in “Taxa” in 1999 and most recently as the stalker Anita in “Livvagterne.”



SHANTI RONEY (Tom)

Shanti Roney is one of the most prominent and versatile Swedish actors of today. After graduating from The Swedish Academic School Of Drama, he embarked on a rich and diverse career in theatre, film, and television. His theatrical resume includes both classics like “Hedda Gabler,” “Madame Bovary,” and “Hamlet” and newly written material like Lars Norén’s “Personkrets 3:1,” “Romeo and Juliet in Sarajevo,” and “Wonder”. He rose to stardom in Daniel Lind Lagerlöf’s “Breaking Out” which earned him high praise among

critics and audiences as well as a Guldbagge for the best supporting role. Roney’s impressive filmography includes Lukas Moodyson’s “Together,” Jan Troell’s “As White As In Snow,” Simon Staho’s “Bang Bang Orangutan,” and many other major performances. His latest movie, “The Girl” (directed by Fredrik Edfelt) was in the 2009 Berlin Film Festival’s official competition.

MALOU REYMANN (Påklædersken)



Malou Reymann was raised in Amsterdam, Paris, and Copenhagen. She started acting as a child in a theatre group. She had her first role in a children’s series on DR’s “Børnel’eren” when she was just 11 years old. Since then, she has been in different TV shows (“Ørnen,” “Klovn”) and films (“Liv,” “White Night,” “Young Man Falls,” and “See My Dress”). She was nominated for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Barbara in *Se min kjole* (*Hush Little Baby*) at the Robert Festival. She also works as a scriptwriter and began studying literature in 2009.



UFFE RØRBÆK (Peter)

Uffe Rørbæk is well known from the popular comedy/music trio, De Nattergale. The trio has been on tour throughout Denmark, has released several CDs, DVDs and has appeared in multiple TV shows. Uffe has been in comedy shows like “The Julekalender,” “My Life as Bent,” “Channel Wild Card,” and “The Theatre by the Highway,” among others. He has also written and directed numerous television shows, including “Monkey Business,” which hosted many famous Danish actors like Claus Bue.

Introducing:



OTTO LEONARDO STEEN RIEKS (William)

(b. 2000)

Son of actress Paprika Steen and producer Mikael Christian Rieks. Appeared at the 2010 Zulu awards.



NOEL KOCH-SØFELDT (Matthias)

(b. 2001)

This is his first feature film production.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES



MARTIN PIETER ZANDVLIET

Director/Co-Writer

Martin Pieter Zandvliet was born in Fredericia, Denmark. Zandvliet is primarily a self-taught director and writer. He began his career as an editor of feature film trailers, short films, and documentaries for various directors. Zandvliet's first film as a director was "Angels of Brooklyn" which won a Danish Robert award for Best Long Documentary and was also chosen for various festivals including Toronto Hot Docs and Nyon Visions Du Reel – International Film

Festival in Switzerland. Transitioning from his trailer productions and documentaries, Zandvliet produced several short films as a writer and director. The multi award-winning "Applause" is Zandvliet's first feature film.



MIKAEL CHRISTIAN RIEKS

Producer

Mikael Christian Rieks was born in Slangerup, Denmark, to television producer Margit Rieks and journalist Carl-Otto Rieks. After graduating from the Copenhagen Media and Television school in 1992, Rieks has been a leading television and documentary producer in Denmark for the past 12 years. Working for the two public service broadcasters DR and TV2, he has produced a long line of international TV formats including "The Power of the Spirits," "On

the Edge of the World," "FC Nerds," "Grumpy Old Men," and "Love Camp." Rieks joined the film producer team at Nordisk Film in 2003, where he produced the documentaries "Overcoming" (Tómas Gislason, 2005) and "Ghosts of Cité Soleil" (Asger Leth, 2006) and the feature film "Karla's World" (Charlotte Sachs Bostrup, 2007), which was nominated for Best Children/Family Film at the Robert Festival, the Oscar equivalent of Denmark. In 2008 he founded the company, Koncern Film.



ANDERS FRITHIOF AUGUST

Screenwriter

Anders Frithiof August was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, to schoolteacher Annie Lauritsen and Academy Award winning film director Bille August (*Pelle the Conquerer*). After working on several features and commercials as an assistant cinematographer, he was accepted into the National Film School of Denmark's screenwriting program, graduating in 2007. He co-wrote the short film, "Grisen" (aka "The Pig"), which was nominated for an Academy Award in

2009. "Grisen" also won the Audience Award at the Hamptons International Film Festival, won Best Short Film at the Miami International Short Film Festival, won the Festival Prize at the Miami Short Film Festival, and won the Audience Award at the Warsaw International Film Festival. Also in 2009, his two first feature films: the comedy "Camping" (original screenplay) and the drama "Applause" (original screenplay, co-written with the director) opened in Danish cinemas.

JESPER TØFFNER

Director of Photography

Jesper Tøffner is a self-taught cinematographer. He started working in film in 1999 as an assistant to Jesper Jargil, director and cinematographer who created a series of documentaries on Dogme 95 director Lars Von Trier. From 2000 to 2003, he was clapper-loader/focus puller/electrician on multiple feature films and commercials. In 2003, he worked for Gubbi Film as a photographer and steadicam-operator on TV shows, short films, and music videos. Since 2004, he has been a freelance cinematographer for numerous films, commercials, TV spots, and music videos, including one with Applause actor Michael Falch from his album "Fodspor I Havet."

PER SANDHOLT

Film Editor

Per Sandholt has worked as an editor since 2002. He edited the feature film "AFR" and co-edited "Ma Salama Jamil" (Walk with Peace Jamil). He was the editor of "My Father From Haifa," which was named Best Documentary at the 2010 Robert Festival, and was co-editor on the documentary films: "Ghosts of Cité Soleil," (winner of the 2008 Directors Guild Award for Best Documentary), "Roskilde," and "Me and Jesper." Additionally, he has edited several music videos and commercials. Most recently, he co-edited the documentary series, "The Quatraro Mystery."

JOHANNES DAM

Sound

Johannes Elling Dam is an autodidact sound engineer and sound designer. Since 2004, he has worked in films like "Ma Salama Jamil" (Walk With Peace Jamil), "Kærestesorger" (Aching Hearts), "Gasolin," and "Applause." Dam also works with Danish radio recordings in a variety of different musical genres.

SUNE MARTIN

Film Composer

Sune Martin composed music for two ballets at the Royal Danish Ballet 2005 and 2006, the documentary "Lynch" (2007), and the short films Dennis (2007) and Cathrine (2008). He is a former member of the band, Blue Foundation, which provided tracks for feature films such as "Miami Vice" and "Twilight."

Critical Review of *APPLAUSE*

"One of the best screen performances of the year."
- Karen Durbin, *New York Times*

"Deeply affecting...unflinchingly real."
- Betsy Sharkey, *Los Angeles Times*

Paprika Steen in *Applause*: One of the five performances that "should be" nominated for the Best Actress Academy Award, as chosen by A.O. Scott, *The New York Times*

"[Steen] brings a thrilling emotional nakedness and...unsentimental honesty to the part."
- Lisa Schwarzbaum, *Entertainment Weekly*

"An extraordinary performance by Paprika Steen."
- Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*

"A fearless, tour-de-force performance by star Paprika Steen."
- Alissa Simon, *Variety*

"Paprika Steen gives her rawest, bravest performance yet in Martin Pieter Zandvliet's *Applause* as a narcissistic stage actress, Thea, whose life closely mirrors the character she is playing nightly: Martha from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*"
- Laura Kern, *Film Comment*

"Quite notable, particularly for its intense, stripped-down lead performance by Paprika Steen."
- Peter Knegt, *indiewire.com*

"Though utterly convincing as a renowned theater actress, it's clear from her work in *Applause* that Paprika Steen has a face for the camera [and] considerable on-screen magnetism..."
- Matthew Connolly, *Slant*

One of reviewer Neil Curry's four films to watch.
- CNN

"A film rooted in old-school independent cinema -- maybe three parts John Cassavetes' *A Woman Under the Influence* to one part Bergman's *Persona* -- with a commanding central performance to match."
- Andrew O'Hehir, *Salon*, 'Pick of the Week'

AWARDS

Zurich Film Festival
Critics' Choice Award

Nashville Film Festival
Bridgestone Grand Jury Prize for Best Actress in Narrative Feature: Paprika Steen

Hamptons International Film Festival
Outstanding Achievement in Acting: Paprika Steen

Karlovy Vary International Film Festival
Best Actress: Paprika Steen

Robert Festival
Best Actress: Paprika Steen

Zulu Awards
Best Actress: Paprika Steen

Mumbai Film Festival
Best Actress: Paprika Steen

OFFICIAL SELECTION

Vancouver International Film Festival

Ghent Film Festival

Hamburg Film Festival

Starz Denver Film Festival

Toronto International Film Festival

Lodz International Film Festival

BFI53 London International Film Festival

Jameson International Film Festival

Nashville International Film Festival

Chennai International Film Festival

Cleveland International Film Festival

Haifa International Film Festival

CREDITS

*WORLD WIDE MOTION PICTURES CORPORATION Presents
a Koncern Film*

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New Danish Screen/Jakob Høgel
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Nordic Film & TV Fund/Hanne Palmquist
Nordisk Film Distribution (DK)

Applause

*Directed by Martin Pieter Zandvliet
Screenplay by Anders Frithiof August and Martin Pieter Zandvliet
Produced by Mikael Christian Rieks
Director of Photography: Jesper Tøffner
Production Design by: Rasmus Cold
Film Editor: Per Sandholt
Sound by Johannes Dam
Score by Sune Martin*

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CREW

Director	Martin Pieter Zandvliet
First Assistant Director	Thomas Schindel
Screenplay	Anders Frithiof August Martin Pieter Zandvliet
Executive Producers	Mikael Christian Rieks Jens Ulrik Pedersen
Producer	Mikael Christian Rieks
Line Producer	Malthe Koch
Editor	Per Sandholt
Trailer Editor	Rikke Selin
Director of Photography	Jesper Tøffner
Production Manager	Thomas Schindel
Production Design	Rasmus Cold
Production Assistants	Line Sander Egede Micha Frei
Costume Designer	Marianna Wassberg
Original Music	Sune Martin
Sound	Johannes Dam
Supervising Sound Editor	Alex Pavlovic
Makeup	Fatima Louborg Louise Hauberg Nielsen
Casting	Gro Therp Bremer

CAST

Paprika Steen	Thea Barfoed
Michael Falch	Christian Barfoed
Otto Leonardo Steen Rieks	William Barfoed
Noel Koch-Søfeldt	Matthias Barfoed
Lars Brygmann	George
Johanne Dam	Pige på café
Michael Kastrupsen	AA mand
Uffe Rørbæk Madsen	Peter
Sara-Marie Maltha	Maiken
Malou Reymann	Påklædersken
Shanti Roney	Tom
Annette Ronning	Bardame (bartender)
Nanna Tange	Ekspedient

KONCERN FILM

Founded in 2008 by producer Mikael Christian Rieks and Koncern TV- og Filmproduktion A/S and grounded in the 1970s ideology of a united spirit and Rieks' underlying philosophy: "Art is, ultimately, an act of empathy." With a number of projects in the pipeline, the company is making a gradual move to the forefront of Danish production. Rieks, formerly from Nordisk Film, produced the documentaries: "Overcoming" (Tómas Gislason, 2005) and "Ghosts of Cité Soleil" (Asger Leth, 2006) and the feature film "Karla's World" (Charlotte Sachs Bostrup, 2007). The company's inaugural production is "Applause."

WORLD WIDE MOTION PICTURES CORPORATION

Founded in 1977, World Wide Motion Pictures Corporation is a diversified company involved in the development, financing, production and distribution of feature films, documentaries, short subjects, industrials and television productions. World Wide's industry executives and board members have produced, distributed and consulted on a wide variety of film and television projects, earning Academy awards, Emmy awards and prizes from international film festivals. For more information about the company, its productions, or its extensive film library, visit www.wwmpc.com.