



"Kahlid is one of the most passionate and diligent actors I have had the pleasure of working with.

He is curious and committed and served as a creative inspiration for all he has collaborated with ...

I hope we will have the opportunity to work together again."

- Amy Mihyang Ginther, Assistant Professor @ University of California, Santa Cruz Department of Theater

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Interview With International Thespian Michela Carattini

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"The Divine Ms. M"

International Thespian - Michela Carattini



With a Masters in Criminology and a selfless passion for others, <u>Michela Carattini (http://www.michelacarattini.com/showreel.html)</u> has leaped across the pond to enhance her acting career and her personal life. This actress, writer, and mom is showing the world that Hollywood isn't the only 'wood,' from her host country where they put "*Another shrimp on the Barbie!*"

How long have you been acting in Australia? I've been pursuing an acting career in Australia for about 4 years.

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December 23, 2017 ... (/how-the-career-consulation-is-a-value-asan-expat-thespian-tips-for-working-actors-abroad#comments) Where did you grow up and what do you miss about home? I grew up in Germany as a 'third culture kid'— my father was Panamanian-American and my mother Australian. The idea of 'home' has many different meanings and I have different senses of home from different places, and also people. Germany gives me that sense of home that involves childhood memories, nostalgia and familiarity, so what I miss most is the beautiful smell of pine, the fairy tale forests and castles, the dark bread and the gingerbread, the very dry sense of humor, the efficient respect of punctuality, and the way the arts are valued and integrated into everyday life.

PROCESSIONS

When did you first get bitten by the acting bug? Apparently, I told my kindergarten teacher I was going to be an actress. It never really wavered, but when, at fourteen, in Germany. I got cast in The Houston Grand Opera's televised production of "Street Scene", that kind of solidified my love for it in a very real sense. In my midtwenties, I took a break from acting to try and change the world for the better. I didn't know if I would return to acting, and in fact, it was a bit of a surprise to me that I did-- the bug hadn't gone away, but it had developed and grown in a different direction.

Why did you leave NYC to become an international actor in

Australia? I actually left NYC to become a social worker in Prague. I was very passionate about doing something to stop human trafficking and after graduating in psychology at Columbia University, I interned at the Prague chapter of La Strada, International, a well-known anti-trafficking NGO headquartered in Amsterdam. What brought me to Australia after that, was a Masters of Criminology offer from Sydney University. The beautiful weather and my then boyfriend (now husband), needing to return to Australia to finish his degree, cinched it.

I see that voice acting is a part of your career. Any advice for voice actors when it comes to accents? (You do an amazing Southern Belle. I should know, I grew up in the South) Oh my goodness thank you-- what a compliment :-) My dad was in the army and we moved around a lot, so I think that developed my skill for accents. I was born on Kelly Airforce base in San Antonio, Texas. I don't remember anything (we left when I was 2 years old), but apparently one of my first words was "ho-TAY-el" (hotel). Learning to speak other languages and play musical instruments, especially when you're young, does wonders for developing your ear. Apart from that, it's practice, practice, practice,!

You've been nominated for Best Actress Twice at The Idllywild International Festival of Cinema. What roles were those for and how have those nominations motivated you? I was nominated for "54 Days" in 2015, for "Le Matinal" in 2016, and then for "Unspoiled by Feminism" in 2017 at Idyllwild and in Sydney. At Idyllwild, I also won "Most Outstanding Body of Work" which I take as an even bigger

compliment! You know, when you keep getting nominated, it's validation that your work is connecting with people-- so, what more could you want? It's like a little flag on your journey that says, "Right direction. Keep going. Keep getting better." These flags come in many formats, not just awards.



How does your Master's in Criminology help you as an actress?

It made me a master of research, which makes me more accurate and interesting at characterization. My hands-on work has given me a plethora of real-life examples and experiences to draw on for all kinds of emotional landscapes. It has given me an open mind, curiosity and empathy for the human psyche and behavior. It has given me an ease and understanding of legal and psychological terminology. It has

refined my eye for observing detail in behavior. It has emphasized the importance of and given me the skills to not take my work home. In all these ways, it was far more valuable to me as an actor than my acting degree.

What is your funniest moment on set? In one film where my character had a strong accent, during one take I dropped the accent and said "You know, this isn't even my real accent." and my co-star and everyone on set bursted out laughing-- and it made the final cut of the film!

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What was your worst moment on set? It was my first lead role in a feature film ("The 33rd Wedding"), and I had food poisoning during one of my key scenes. Other characters literally describe me as attractive and beautiful in the script-- and I felt anything but-- and I had a kissing scene! And of course I was very worried about my acting-- I felt it was all I could do to hold myself together, say my lines and not hurl. Luckily, it doesn't show when you watch the film.

I see that you do a lot of theater. Do you have a desire to constantly change mediums or will film be your

main focus? I see theatre and film acting as requiring very different technical skills with very different types of fulfillment. I started off in theatre and musicals, and I find my time in theatre has held me in good stead for the screen in terms of craft and practice. I've only recently started concentrating on film and TV, but I try to do at least one theatre production a year to keep that muscle active and strong.



What is "Actors Gone Global" and what do you see is it's main purpose?

Actors Gone Global (http://www.actorsgoneglobal.com/) is a blog I started three years ago, with four other actors from around the globe: one in LA, one in NYC, one in London, one in Berlin, and myself in Sydney. It was an answer to my desire to truly be an international actor in the same way I am an international person, to not be limited by geography, to embrace the new technology for auditioning and distribution, and to share information with other actors interested in building an international film community. In a way, it was also a reaction to the mentality here in Australia that you have to move to LA to have a successful onscreen career. I was so impressed when I discovered #TheSeoulBrotha -- it's really the only other blog I've come across with a wealth of information in a similar vein-- go you!!

What advice do you have for actors who are interested in going global? If you want to break into other markets, go one at a time. Wait until you've established yourself in one before tackling two, then three. Cater to market differences, but essentially you must do in your secondary markets exactly what you did in your primary: establish a local address, an agent if possible, attend film festivals and networking events in that market, become known to casting directors, and build relationships through your existing networks. Often the biggest obstacle is just getting out of your own way and believing it's possible. If you're interested, you can get a free Tip Sheet on going global and breaking into new markets when you subscribe by email to Actors Gone Global (http://www.actorsgoneglobal.com/).

You're a mother, wife, and actress. What is the key ingredient to this amazing juggling act? Haha! The key ingredient is a partner who is a hands-on parent and who respects and values my work as much as his own! Our schedule has built-in flexible trade-offs. I believe strongly in not holding back the rest of your life for your career, and that, especially in our industry, the rest of your life in fact feeds and enriches your career, and vice-versa. I've also really started understanding my career as a business since having kids, and I treat is as such. I use my time more wisely, and only for what is most important to me— it's a far more value-driven and focused approach.

Australia has a strong film/acting industry. Do you see yourself going back over the pond soon to NY or even Europe or LA soon? It's all possible. I like living here, and I can travel anywhere I need to for the work I want to do. Last year, I shot a film in Milan (Italy). My partner and I do talk about living elsewhere, or rotating on a 6-month-basis, but mainly to enrich our lives and especially the lives of our children.

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You just completed a short film "Unspoiled by Feminism," what can you tell us about it? This short film is the first screenplay I wrote, and I'm pleased to say it's won a slew of international awards at festivals already including "Best Film" and "Best Foreign Short." It's based on some research I did while in Prague, and the booming Eastern-European Dating industry-- but in a romantic-comedy format. I play a Czech woman on a date with an Australian guy who's fed up dating Australian women. It screens next at Manhattan Film Shorts in NYC!

Being an international actor is very different, what skills would you say you have acquired because you chose to move overseas?

Well, I've acquired the ability to do an Aussie accent! Being among Australians has also taught me the incredible value of work/life balance and being more laid back about things. I've always been an international person, of many cultures and languages, and that has always been an advantage as an actor-- accents, languages, perspectives. Being in a country so far away from the other major film markets has also forced me to expand the way I look at film markets and my career, and understand market specificities better-- it is essentially what made me bring my internationality to my acting career.

What are you doing when you're not acting?

When I am not acting, I am doing the business work of acting. I am also a writer-- I've just written two feature films, and have been hired as head writer for a new historical miniseries. I volunteer as the Research & Collaborations Manager for Women in Theatre & Screen (WITS) in Australia, and as any mom knows, I am also always Mom-ing (I have a one-year-old and a six-year-old).



Australian director Anna Broinowski is one of few female directors to win an award last year in Australia. What will it take for the climate of the industry to change to provide equality for women and minorities?

Yeah, the stats are bad all over. It's natural for those in powerful, decision-making positions to relate to people more like themselves, and not even realize their bias. Like Geena Davis, I passionately believe that research is the key to getting people to see A) that a problem (ie, a dearth of diversity) exists and B) that diversity pays, on multiple levels.

The Freedom Partnership (http://endslavery.salvos.org.au/) is obviously a forward thinking charity focused on ending slavery. Beyond the obvious reasons why is this important for you? Whenever anyone asks me why I chose to fight that battle, as opposed to the many others that need fighting, my answer is: it made me the angriest. It involves the cross section of so many different abuses of human rights, and the continued exploitation of the less powerful on so many levels, that for me it seems the greatest of all evils...but that's just me. It's a truly complex area that many people confuse with people-smuggling or think it only involves the sex industry, or think it doesn't happen here...And most of all, without us, the consumers, it wouldn't exist—we have the power to end it in a way we don't with many other things.



This is the type of actor we should all long to be like! Selfless, dedicated, passionate and laser-focused. "The Divine Ms. M" is dominating the industry from short films to features and she's not slowing down. Follow her on Twitter @divinemsmichela (https://twitter.com/divinemsmichela), check out her IMDb (http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1522668/?ref =fn_al_nm_1), peruse her website (http://www.michelacarattini.com/index.html) but whatever you do, get this young lady in your next project!

I hope you enjoyed this post. Do you agree? Please reply in the comments below with your thoughts.

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Till next time thespians,

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Kahlid Elijah Tapia is an award winning actor who built his film career in Seoul, South Korea. He began to flourish in 2010 gaining experience in film, television, and theater. He is known for Jojakdwen Doshi (2017), Haebangchon (2015) & Gamgi (2013).

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