

MIGUEL ÁNGEL MUÑOZ

**“WHEN I SAW
'BASIC INSTINCT'
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT
I WOULD WIND UP WORKING
WITH THIS WOMAN
THAT I WAS WILD ABOUT”**

BY TONI ALONSO
PHOTO JORGE ALVARIÑO
STYLE ÁFRICA GARCÍA
MAKEUP YAEL FDEZ.-MAQUIEIRA

WE MET UP WITH MIGUEL ÁNGEL AT THE HOTEL THE WESTIN PALACE IN MADRID, DURING A REALLY FUN PHOTO SESSION IN WHICH THE ACTOR WAS COMPLETELY AT HOME. IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T FOLLOWED HIS TRACKS, A YEAR AND A HALF AGO HE PACKED HIS BAGS TO LEAVE FOR AMERICA. AND HE HAS HAD PRETTY GOOD LUCK: TWO SUCCESSFUL SERIES IN MEXICO AND A MOVIE TOGETHER WITH SHARON STONE AND ANDY GARCÍA, *WHAT ABOUT LOVE*, WHICH DEBUTS THIS SPRING. HE HAS ALSO PURSUED HIS UNSTOPPABLE CARREER IN OUR COUNTRY. HE HAS TWO OTHER TITLES UNDERWAY, *VIRAL* AND *AL FINAL TODOS MUEREN*, AS WELL AS THE SHORT FILM *HAY DOS TIPOS DE PERSONAS*. AND IF THAT IS NOT ENOUGH, HE WANTS TO MAKE PLANS TO DO THEATER.

HE ADMITS THAT HE IS ENJOYING A PRETTY GOOD MOMENT IN A RATHER DISCOURAGING AGE. BUT MIGUEL ÁNGEL IS NOT NEW TO THIS. "HAVING TRAINING MEANS MORE OPTIONS AND TOOLS TO WORK WITH," HE ASSERTS. HE BEGAN HIS TRAINING IN THE STUDIO OF JUAN CARLOS CORAZZA AT THE AGE OF 22, WHEN HE ALREADY HAD PERFORMED IN TITLES SUCH AS *AL SALIR DE CLASE*, *COMPAÑEROS* OR *UN PASO ADELANTE*. THIS LAST SERIES SERVED TO LAUNCH HIM INTERNATIONALLY AND ENABLE HIS FLEETING BUT FRUITFUL PASS THROUGH THE MUSIC BUSINESS. NOW AT THE AGE OF 29, HE CONCENTRATES ONE HUNDRED PERCENT ON ACTING, BUT HE DOES NOT RULE OUT GETTING BEHIND THE CAMERAS IN THE FUTURE. HE ACHIEVES EVERYTHING THAT HE ATTEMPTS, AND SO WE WILL PAY ATTENTION TO HIS UPCOMING PROJECTS.

How was the experience of filming together with two important stars from Hollywood like Sharon Stone and Andy García? Were you comfortable filming in English?

It was a marvelous experience. It is the second project that I filmed in English, after the remake of *Ben-hur*. Three months of unbelievable shooting. It was a great pleasure being able to share the project with Sharon, Andy, José Coronado, Maia Morgenstern (*The Passion of the Christ*) and Iain Glen (*A Game of Thrones*). It brought me a lot professionally and at the personal level. Some moments apart from the filming in which Andy told me how Coppola called him to make *Godfather 3* are priceless.

With the crisis that we are experiencing in Spain. Do more projects come up abroad?

My case is somewhat unusual, because a year and a half ago, coinciding with this super-crisis, I had the chance to leave to work abroad. I did not plan to do so, nor was I thinking about what was to come. Suddenly, fate put me in Mexico, and working there and I lined up one project after another.

**"IN MEXICO I AM EXPERIENCING A GOOD MOMENT,
BUT IF TWO OR THREE YEARS GO BY AND
I DON'T KEEP WORKING, THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY
WINDS UP FORGETTING ABOUT YOU"**

Outside of our country there are many possibilities, and there are also a lot of people. You have to be as enthusiastic as possible and not throw in the towel in order to get ahead with your career. If there is the possibility of going abroad to get ahead, of course, you have to do so, but without thinking that there is nothing more to do here.

From *Capadocia* you went on to *Infames*. Have you made a place for yourself in Mexico?

The two projects worked really well, one on the private channel HBO and the other on public television, Canal 28. I got there and I was completely unknown to audiences, but now there has been an important change. Although you never make a place for yourself because this is a long-distance race and you have to keep fighting and proving yourself in each project that you do. Now I am experiencing a good moment there, but if two or three years go by and I don't keep working, the collective memory winds up forgetting about you. I have the doors open to be able to return, but this doesn't mean that for my whole life I will be able to work in that country.

About the accent and the vocabulary... Up to now you have only played a Spaniard?

In one project they wanted the character to be Spanish, also due to the political plot that it involves. In the other series I preferred to do it in Castilian Spanish because I thought that I didn't have enough time to do a 100% credible Mexican character. We agreed that in the next series I would play a Mexican because after living there for 11 months, I can speak like a native Mexican –laughter.

When you were 14 years old and you began appearing repeatedly on television, did you imagine that you would get this far?

I haven't gotten anywhere –laughter. I never stopped dreaming, but I have never wanted to, nor do I want to turn my dreams into goals that make me unhappy if I cannot fulfill them. I consider myself fortunate for working and making a living from my acting career, making your living with this is very difficult. But I didn't imagine anything. When I saw *Basic Instinct*, back then I didn't know that I was going to wind up working with this woman that I was wild about –laughter.

At that age did you consider it a job or was it more of a hobby?

Starting at the age of 16 I began to realize that it was more than a hobby, that it was a very important part of my life. When I wasn't working, I would notice that something was missing. My father always helped me understand that this was neither an obligation nor a job. I would go to an audition at the age of 11, and my father didn't even give me the text, and he wasn't worried about whether they would accept me. Often





"IN ORDER TO SATISFY MY APPETITE FOR THEATER I HAVE BEEN DOING RELIGIOUS THEATER AT EASTER FOR THREE YEARS NOW"

if you are very little and you do this work, it is usually the parents who force the children. In my case, it happened in a completely natural way and, as luck would have it, since I was a spirited or entertaining child, they accepted me, and I would have a very good time, but it was not more than that. I wanted to play soccer, and have fun and have a good time while filming.

You are a multifaceted actor who has tried all media, but perhaps theater is the side that we know the least about. Do you have an appetite to get up on stage and spend various months performing a play?

A really big appetite. Theater is marvelous, I love it. My first good savings from *Un paso adelante* were invested in producing a play called *Quickly*, in which I was acting together with Daniel Huarte in the Alcázar Theater of Madrid. Then I lost my savings, because it did not have a very big audience. Theater projects involve a long-term commitment. But when I commit to a project, I am serious, and if I do something, I stick with it until the end. In order to satisfy my appetite for theater, I have been doing religious theater (*autos sacramentales*) at Easter for three years now. It is a lot of work for only one performance. You practice verse texts from the 16th century for a month and a half in order to perform them for only one day in a church, and this is wonderful too. It is another very interesting sort of theater.

How was the experience in the micro-theater?

Unbelievable. It was micro-theater, but maxi-experience, and good in every respect, because the director and author of the script Nicolás Casariego and Manuela Vellés formed a group that couldn't be better. We got along perfectly and it was a great pleasure to go there every Friday and Saturday and have a good time. In fact, we are toying with the idea of being able to prepare a larger-scale performance, without hurrying but without interruption. We want to do it again.

I am going to mention 5 of your projects in television and you tell me what they have meant: *Al salir de clase*: My group of friend for the last 15 years.

***Un paso adelante*:** A boom sound –laughter. A lot of experiences, a tremendous amount of work, but some of the best moments of my life.

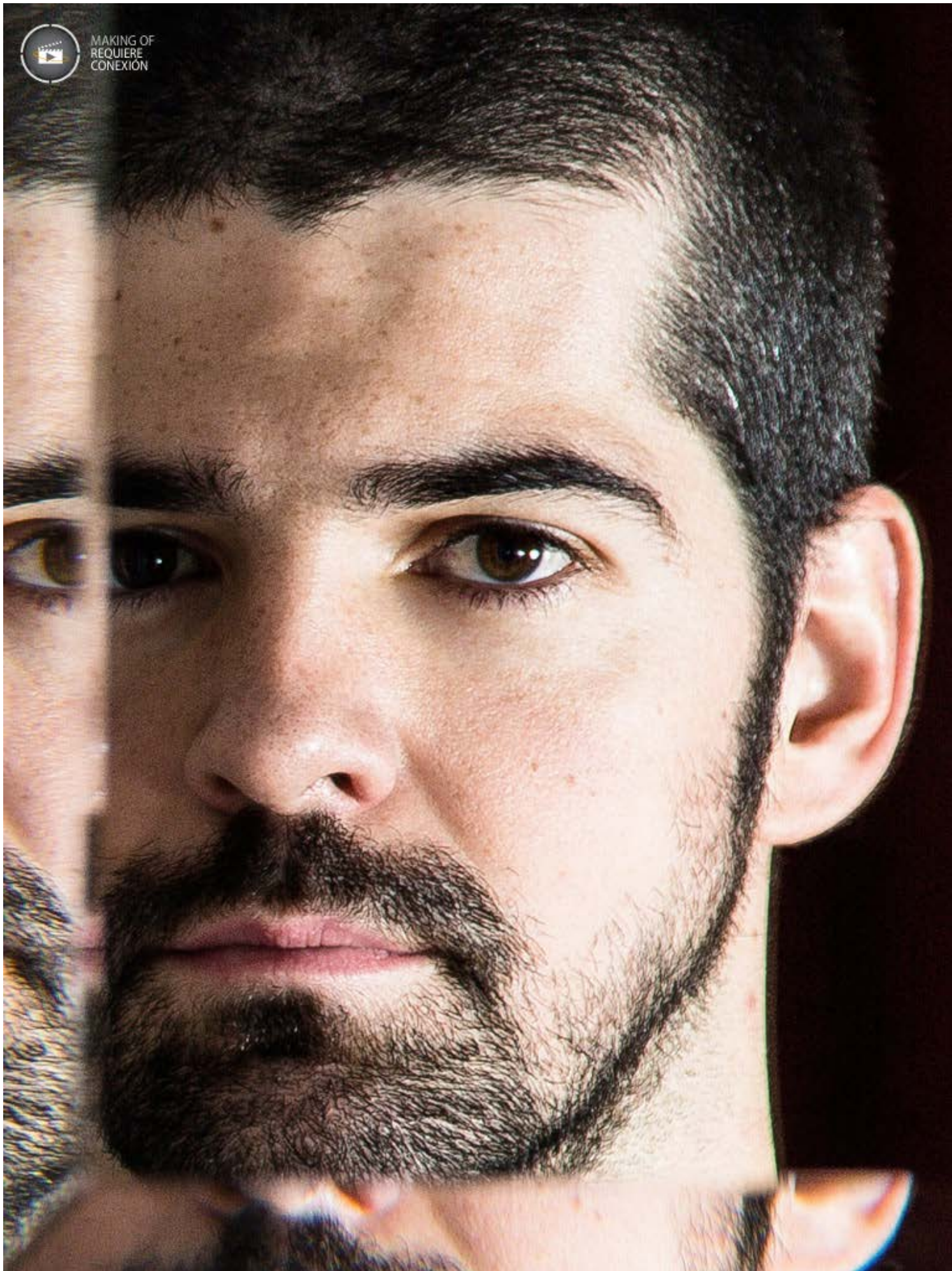
***El síndrome de Ulises*:** The project in which I was the most involved, too involved indeed, and which I most regretted coming to an end on television.

***Vida loca*:** Complete fun, what comes to my mind are these giant teeth that I put on, and that I was wild about.

***Infames*:** I am very proud of this because it was a very special series in Mexico, which was being broadcast during the six months before the election campaign of Peña Nieto, Andrés López and Josefina



MAKING OF
REQUIERE
CONEXIÓN





MAKING OF
REQUIERE
CONEXIÓN



"I AM VERY PROUD, HAPPY AND THANKFUL FOR THE CHARACTER OF *EL TITO ROBER*, BUT IN ORDER TO EVOLVE AND DO OTHER THINGS I HAD TO GIVE IT UP"

Vázquez, the three candidates that there were. The project was very revolutionary because everything that the local politicians, many of whom are very corrupt, do not want anyone to know, we were bringing to light the next day. This was true to the extent that during the first weeks of broadcasting, the government wanted to cancel the series on us, and it forced the production team to change the colors and letterhead of the Internal Revenue Service, because if not, they wouldn't let us broadcast any more: we were bringing up many things that they did not want anyone to know.

Do you think that actors, as public personalities, and points of reference for many people, should get involved in subjects of current events?

Beyond public personalities, actors or celebrities, we are people, and I respect everyone's values and ideas. Everyone is mature enough to express what he things according to the situations. I don't think that the fact of being more or less popular implies that you should not say what you think, but you should have enough sense to know where you say it and when you say it.

Although you had already participated in two historic series, such as *Al salir de clase* and *Compañeros*, the beginning of your definitive success was the character of *el tito Rober* in *Un paso adelante*. Do you think that people confuse the person and the character?

Yes, and that's normal. And you have to understand it as being normal, without that being a problem for you, because when you get into everyone's home at dinnertime you are just one more person, and they don't see you, they see the character. If this happens every week for three years, and six million people see it, and you make a record... it is very normal. It is not only the people's "fault," it comes with the job. In the end, time puts things in their place.

In this period, you also were introduced to the music world, and received recognition both in Spain and also in Europe. Why did you decide not to release your record in Spain?

This decision was appropriate in order to be able to have a more neutral image of the actor who I would like to be and to change roles in every project in which I perform. When I finished the series, I decided to stop singing in order to do *El cartero de Neruda (The Postman)*, but some months later they made me an offer to record a solo album in France. It was a very appetizing project because the series was also being broadcast and it made sense. I am always extremely proud, and happy and grateful to the series and the character of *el tito Rober*, but in order to be able to evolve and do other things I had to give it up, and one of the conditions that I imposed was that the record could never be released in Spain. They accepted that, and I did it, and it was a great success in many countries, with many golden records. I had a great time, and the experience was very nice. Singing with Janet Jackson in a concert, just imagine! –laughter.



“POPULARITY IS SOMETHING THAT YOU MUST REGARD WITH GREAT CAUTION, BUT ABOVE ALL YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU. IF THEY HAVE THEIR FEET ON THE GROUND, THEN IN THE END YOU WILL ALSO”

Do they still call you ‘MAM’?

Not so much anymore. It is something that is also latent, and something that I wanted to leave aside because it had a lot to do with my musical career and with the character from the series. As time passes, you have to accept things, the record of projects and the life of each individual, with affection. It doesn't bother me. Obviously, the people who know me call me Miguel Ángel or Miguel rather than ‘MAM’, and if someone says it to me, it sounds funny and I say to him “What’s with ‘MAM’, man?” –laughter.

The social networks are a good tool for well-known personalities to get closer to their followers.

What do you usually use it for?

Twitter is the one that I have been the most active in, although not so much lately. The social networks have to do with part of the work, but there is part of it that it seems to me very interesting and nice to be able to share with people. However, I have always kept a careful watch on my personal subjects, and I try to draw a line that I do not wish to cross.

In spite of being a well-known actor do you usually use the subway and other day-to-day things?

You can let it go to your head without being popular, without enjoying recognition... In our case, popularity is something that you have to regard with great caution, but above all you have to be careful with the people around you. If they have their feet on the ground, then in the end you will also. I consider myself a millionaire in friends. I have the best in the world. There are many less than the followers that I have in Twitter –laughter. And they are so sensible, honest and such nice people that I learn from them every day and I try to be like them. A lot of what I am, of the good and the bad, I owe to my friends.

Since the beginning we have seen that you have a very muscular physique. Is that due to genetics or is it hard to maintain?

Pure and simple genetics, and a lot of luck –laughter. I always liked sports, but genetics helps. I have always played and I continue to play soccer. One thing that perhaps left its mark on me to a great extent was when I was sixteen years old and I began to prepare for *Un paso adelante*, eight hours a day of dancing. During the series I was dancing for three and a half years every day without stopping, and at the same time I kept playing sports. But I have not gone to the gym very often, except when I had to put on muscle for the series. I get bored, and every time I have to do a project where they can require this, I start up, but I always prefer to play more aerobic sports rather than lifting weights. I am very lucky. They have been telling me for a lot of years “yes, yes, when I was your age...” Soon I will have to begin to take care of myself –laughter.



