

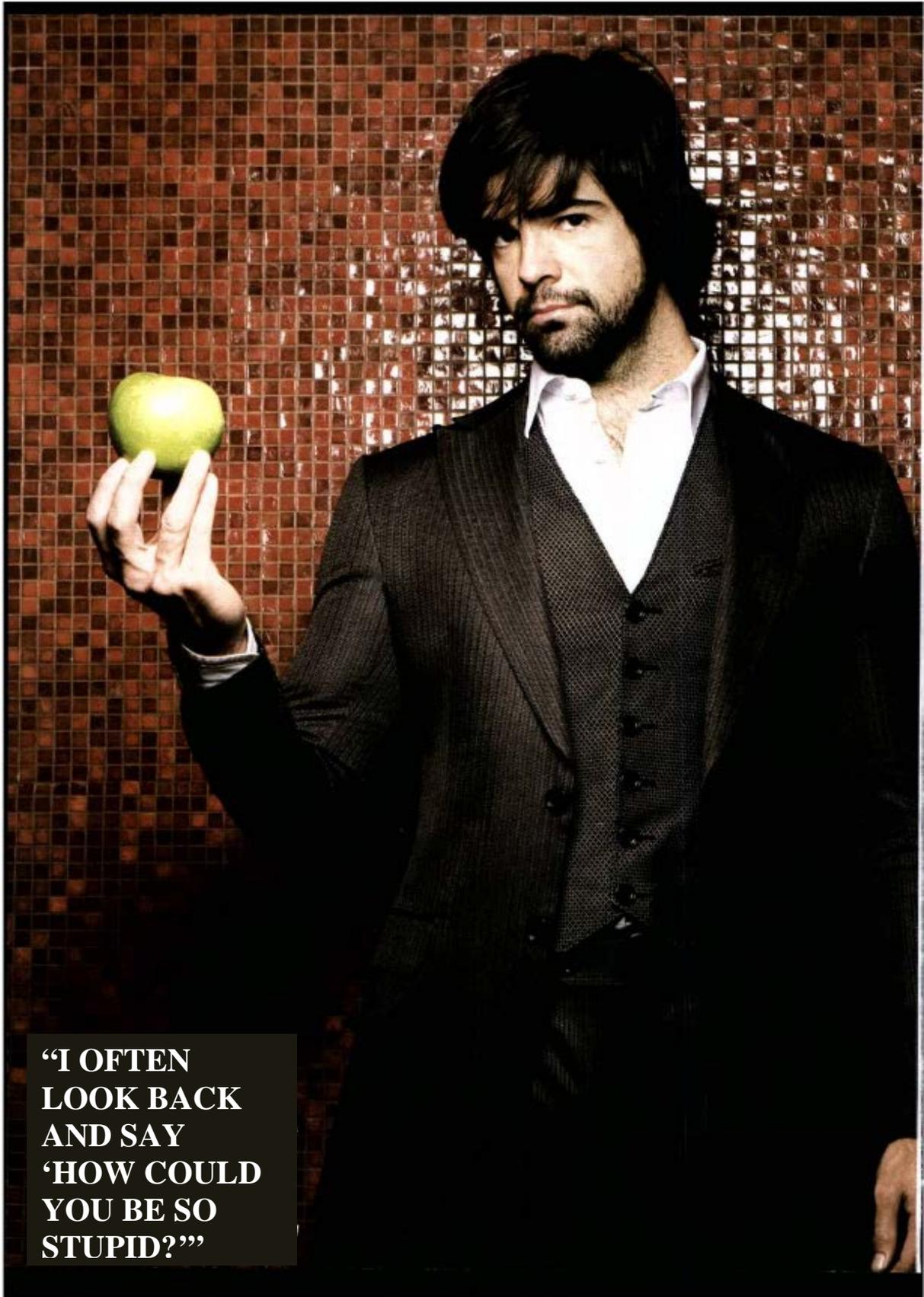


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Pantalla

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MIGUEL ÁNGEL MUÑOZ IS WEARING A SUIT FROM HUGO BOSS, SHIRT AND TIE FROM ZENGA, SHOES FROM DIOR, AND WATCH FROM NOVADO.



The initials MAM do not convince him. Not any more. His new characters are very different from his part in UPA Dance. Now he is Miguel Ángel Muñoz.

When he receives the offprint of the screenplays with the initials MAM on the front page he goes up to the control office to tell them that the next time they should please do the same as with all the actors, write his name: Miguel Ángel Muñoz. It doesn't bother him, but the 26-year-old actor who debuts this week on Antena 3 in the mini-series *La piel azul* [The Blue Skin], produced by BocaBoca, has nothing to do with that young man of 20 who filled the Palau Sant Jordi singing songs from the series that launched his fame, *Un paso adelante*. I tell him that maybe he did not withdraw in time from that youth product with such a marked profile, but he doesn't agree. For him, each stopping place has its moment, each person is given what he is given, and, in his case, he knows that [his character] *el tito Rober* casts a very long shadow. He confronted many years of the series, tours and initiation in the music world without stopping once to think all of this over: he limited himself to working in order to make a place for himself. When he stopped, he began to get training, and a course at the school of the famous Corazza changed his outlook. 2010 is the year that we are going to see the results of this stop along the road. In addition to *La piel azul* (the history of a group of young people who go on vacation on the high seas and, when they are completely relaxed, jump into the water forgetting to let down the ladder that brings them back onboard), in the coming months he will debut in two movies *Tensión sexual no resuelta* [Unresolved Sexual Tension] and the superproduction *Lope*; and the remake of *Ben Hur* for television with all luxuries and in English. Our appointment with Miguel Ángel Muñoz occurs in one of the most avant-garde hotels in Madrid, the Vinnici Soho, located in the neighborhood Las Letras, and there, while he has a good breakfast, we discover that MAM is definitely dead. Welcome Miguel Ángel Muñoz.



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FROM TITO ROBER TO ANTEGUA.

Although Miguel Ángel Muñoz made his cinema debut at nine years of age, his natural medium is television. *Un paso adelante* and *El síndrome de Ulises* are the series that made a place for him among the country's most popular young faces. His starring role in *La piel azul* and his interpretation of Antegua, a new character created for the remake of the movie *Ben-Hur* put the actor back in his natural medium.

Q. Is *La piel azul* the first step on your new path?

A. I am very happy with my five most recent projects, and this is a new direction. Although I am still young, I am growing older, and this enables me to get characters with more conflicts. Since three and a half years ago, when I went through Corazza's school, I know that I can choose one path or another from among those that life dictates. Before, the whirlpool didn't let me do anything other than work. It's not that I take it more seriously, I already did that, but I also look for other things to entertain myself. I realized what an idiot I am and how little I know. In *La piel azul* I was not able to bond with my character, Germán, because his is very different from me. But when I was able to reach out to him, I began to enjoy myself.

Q. Is this a story based on real events?

A. Yes, and very extreme events. What these young people think will be four marvelous days are ruined shortly after they set sail. They are not all such good friends as they think they

are, and they have to choose between saving someone else and saving themselves. It was a very rough shooting, in Alicante on the high seas, and this helped create a feeling of distress in all of us.

Q. Although you are blazing a new trail, this character is conceited, and *Tensión sexual no resuelta* seems like a bit more of the same thing...

A. Since I finished *Un paso adelante*, I have rejected everything that looked like *el tito Rober*. The movie that I debut now I play a very exposed character whom it was difficult for me to accept, although it is true that the only thing that we intend is that people have a good time.

Q. Are you aware that you have a very specific image?

A. My friends know me, and the people that I am close to also. I can't struggle against this. Does it bother me? I just can't do anything about it. I won't deny that I often look back and say "How could you be so stupid?" But without exaggerating... A lot has happened to me, I am not perfect, and I have made a lot



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of mistakes but I haven't gotten too disoriented. Also, I must say that if you have values and strong roots and you lose your head a little bit, you can always pull yourself back together.

Q. In the final analysis, did *Tito Rober* do you more harm than good?

A. It would be very egotistical of me to think this. It did me a lot of good, in many respects. But six million people were watching me every week, and I know that this could wind up confusing a lot of people. I know that caused conflicting feelings. When I debuted the play *El cartero de Neruda* [The Neruda's Postman], I realized that there were people who went to see *Rober*, they were looking for him, and they didn't find him. But, you know, I was always clear to me that everything was going to be terribly difficult for me. They never gave me anything for free, and if I keep getting chances it is because when I work the team is happy. I always see the bottle half full. I am lucky, yes, but I work very hard. Other people don't have to prove so much, there are also people with a lot of talent who do not see their big chance coming. I have gotten used to seeing things this way.

Q. Perhaps you didn't stop in time...

A. In my opinion I did. I didn't know how to sing or dance. When the group was created I restricted myself to rapping, because I don't have musical talent. My character within the series left the group, he was singing solo, and I did this in public. When the series was done, all this was over, and I went into theater. I even made an enemy out of my former agent,

who was asking me for 25 million pesetas to release me. I won the lawsuit, and I could go, but everybody wanted more. I was 20 years old, it was a success and I enjoyed it, but my calling has always been acting.

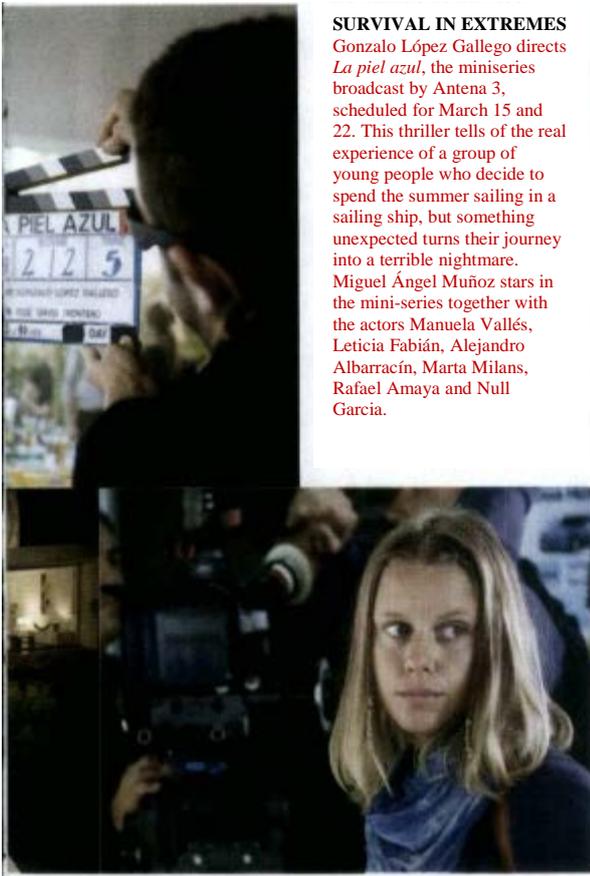
Q. Some of your fellow actors in the series wound up being very angry about it...

A. Well, the situation is different, because a lot of them sing, and music is also a calling for them, and maybe their musical goals were different. For me it was a tremendous gift: they paid for my singing classes and I was singing in large venues, it didn't matter to me whether it was *Morenita muchachita* or *Mediterráneo*. I was happy. Thanks to this I am known in 63 countries, and I worked in France or Italy. If they encourage you to produce a certain product, you are free to accept it or not, but if you do it, you have to follow through with it. And that is what I did. I keep thinking that who makes these records is Miguel Ángel Muñoz and not the character from the series, and this winds up affecting me. A year and a half after the series had ended, they offered me the chance to make a solo record in France. I wasn't planning to sing again in my life, but the series was very hot there, and I considered it because the offer was very good. I made my conditions: if I can compose, write the lyrics, chose the repertoire, work with the producers, if there is a budget and the record is not released in Spain, then yes. And that's how it was. I got a gold record in all the countries where it came out! I shared the stage with Janet Jackson and Nelly Furtado, but I didn't mention it here,



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SURVIVAL IN EXTREMES
Gonzalo López Gallego directs *La piel azul*, the miniseries broadcast by Antena 3, scheduled for March 15 and 22. This thriller tells of the real experience of a group of young people who decide to spend the summer sailing in a sailing ship, but something unexpected turns their journey into a terrible nightmare. Miguel Ángel Muñoz stars in the mini-series together with the actors Manuela Vallés, Leticia Fabián, Alejandro Albarracín, Marta Milans, Rafael Amaya and Null García.

because it distracted from my true path. It is not my calling, but if I have a good time and I can take advantage of it, then why not? They gave me a prize at Cannes for being the Spaniard who had sold the most records that year outside of his country, and right then and there I thanked them and announced that my musical career was over, something really great but it wasn't real. Do I know how to do it because I sold one million records? No.

Q. Well Tito Rober still casts a very long shadow.

A. Enough... Look, never in my life have I turned up the collar of a shirt or grown a goatee, and six years later they keep asking me these things. But it was two phenomena, the series and the group, in which I was still in character. And there is a lot of yellow press and they choose whom they will talk about. And I was the one they picked.

Q. Was it as hard as it looked?

A. It's not that it was hard. It is still hard. If you don't like it and you don't play their game, it is hard. Until you reach the point when it doesn't affect you, you have a bad time. They found girlfriends, nude pictures... No, I wasn't very lucky in this respect. [He laughs].

Q. What was the worst part?

A. I prefer not to talk too much about it because it was very upsetting, but it is obvious that I have had very serious family problems that require privacy so that they can be solved, and they don't give it to you... it is rough and difficult. It is very upsetting. It seems sad that they do not distinguish between people who play their game and people who don't.

Q. I imagine that dating Mónica Cruz, Penélope's sister, and Tom Cruise's sister-in-law, was not a big help.

A. When you start a relationship with someone, you do not place importance on anything other than whether you like this girl, and at that time I was very much in love with Mónica. I didn't matter to me whether that was her name or Elisa Pérez. You can't control what other people think.

Q. Emotional states, in general, can't be controlled?

A. Finding a person who understands you is difficult, and more so as the years go by. You get more demanding, and the other person isn't the way that you want them to be. It is still a lottery, but when it occurs it is marvelous. It is always worth the effort. In this world, you notice right away the people who only approach you to take a picture. They are women I usually don't talk to. I don't like to appear in the media if we aren't in the middle of a promotion campaign. Moreover, in this respect we actors have more problems than other professions, which is also something that doesn't work to your advantage. If you play soccer, it affects you, but less, because in the last analysis what is important is scoring goals. In our case, if you are in the media in spite of yourself, and you become a character, then having access to certain projects is difficult because you are more of a character than the character that you have to play.

Q. Have you noticed this in the eyes of a casting manager?

A. It has happened to me often. In *El síndrome de Ulises*, the first person who didn't want me to play the part with the casting manager, Laura Cepeda. Then, as time went on, she admitted to me that she was wrong, and that I would be able to do it. I thanked her, and I will thank her again.

“I ADMIT THAT I HAVE MADE MANY MISTAKES, BUT IF YOU HAVE VALUES AND STRONG ROOTS, AND YOU LOSE YOUR HEAD A LITTLE BIT, YOU CAN ALWAYS PULL YOURSELF BACK TOGETHER.”

Q. How do you feel about the fact that for every second project they want you to take off your clothes?

A. You have to know what you are doing, because when they ask you to take off your clothes they always justify it somehow. We talk about it, and there is no problem. If the answer is no, then no. But if the answer is yes, then we get on with it. When the moment comes, there is never a problem if everything was discussed well beforehand. But they must not force me: I decide it. Because according to the character, the physical aspect is one more element.

Q. You were in Los Angeles for three months. Was there a moment when you considered staying there and trying your luck?

A. I think you have to be a prophet in your own land in order to be able to develop your career internationally, and also in my particular situation, different personal ties keep me here, and I don't have all the freedom that in theory I could have. My path is here until the day comes when I can go for one year to work or to pursue further training. Right now, I want to keep on going as I am, develop in a very ambitious way, and keep focused on the actor that I would like to be.