

THE SEVERING



A FILM BY MARK PELLINGTON



THE BACKSTORY

A feature length dance film, *The Severing* is a cathartic movement piece that I created in collaboration with the brilliant choreographer NINA McNEELY (Gaspar Noe's *CLIMAX*) and rising Dutch cinematographer EVELIN REI. Inspired by the Wim Wenders film *PINA*, I was interested in expressing feelings and emotions through a 'story of movement and text', rather than plot, capturing emotion and physicality on an experiential, non-linear visceral level. There is a story in this film, but it is abstract, and found in the movements of bodies and souls.

I'd been making independent films in Hollywood for 20 years and what was clear to me is that traditional narrative film was not the right vessel to share 'the story' of loss I had experienced and needed to express. Not every form or methodology can properly illustrate the hues of a particular emotional tone. I was unable to make a certain "kind" of plot driven narrative film that could effectively express specific feelings- dark, internal, physical, oblique- that I experienced about grief and loss. I searched for the right vehicle of expression, and then I met Nina McNeely.

I came to realize that grief lies in the body, grief lies in the physical, it lies in the DNA... Making dance the best non-verbal vessel to communicate this “story” of feeling leaden, overwhelmed, invisible. It’s the way to express what it feels like to be severed or to feel nothing. The film is a cathartic re-encounter for anybody who’s felt loss, or isolation, or struggled with these themes of fear, reconnection, isolation. This was made before COVID but underscores these themes found in our collective isolation.

The difficulty of union is the underpinning of this work. And, the struggle to recover that primal need for touch and reconnection. As if you could push a baby back into a woman after it’s born, it’s impossible, because we are pushed out into this harsh reality alone. And the comfort, that warm safety-net, is taken from us, and that’s sometimes what grief feels like, being pushed out in the world alone. Through the efforts, beauty, and interpretation of Nina and these wonderful dancers brought my idea to life. I was able to learn, I was able to see myself in this flesh, standing alone, separated from the floor, balanced, climbing, holding. After the convulsions of grief, after the submersion of darkness, it was an opportunity to see myself and thus, perhaps help others, allow others, to see themselves in bodies that are eternal, and not from a place in time, but from a universal place of knowing and experiencing.





“THE SEVERING IS AN ARTHOUSE FEVER
DREAM...A MESMERIZING RUMINATION ON LIFE AND GRIEF...VISCERAL,
RAW EMOTION THROUGH DANCE”

- DEBBIE ELIAS
BEHIND THE LENS

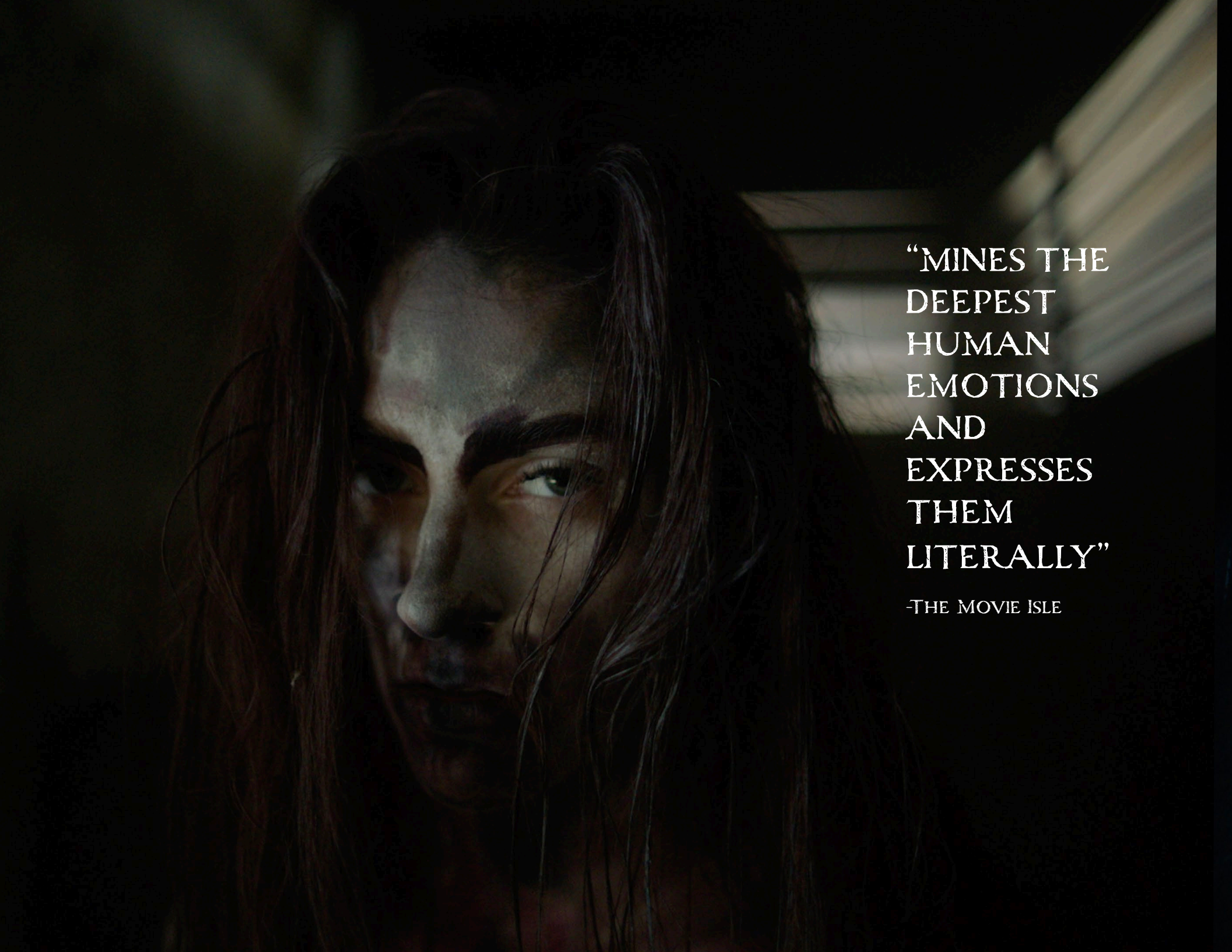


“BRUTALLY RESONANT”

- HEAR US SCREAM







“MINES THE
DEEPEST
HUMAN
EMOTIONS
AND
EXPRESSES
THEM
LITERALLY”

-THE MOVIE ISLE

“PELLINGTON MOVES BEYOND THE
LIMITATIONS OF NARRATIVE
TO GET AT SOMETHING
PRIMAL AND RAW”

- JIM HEMPHILL
FILMMAKER MAGAZINE



“BOLD,, BIZARRE, HAUNTING...
DEFIES THE TRADITIONAL...
CHALLENGING CINEMA WITH
IMAGE THAT INDUCE DREAD
AND PARANOIA”

- NICK CLEMENT
PIPELINE



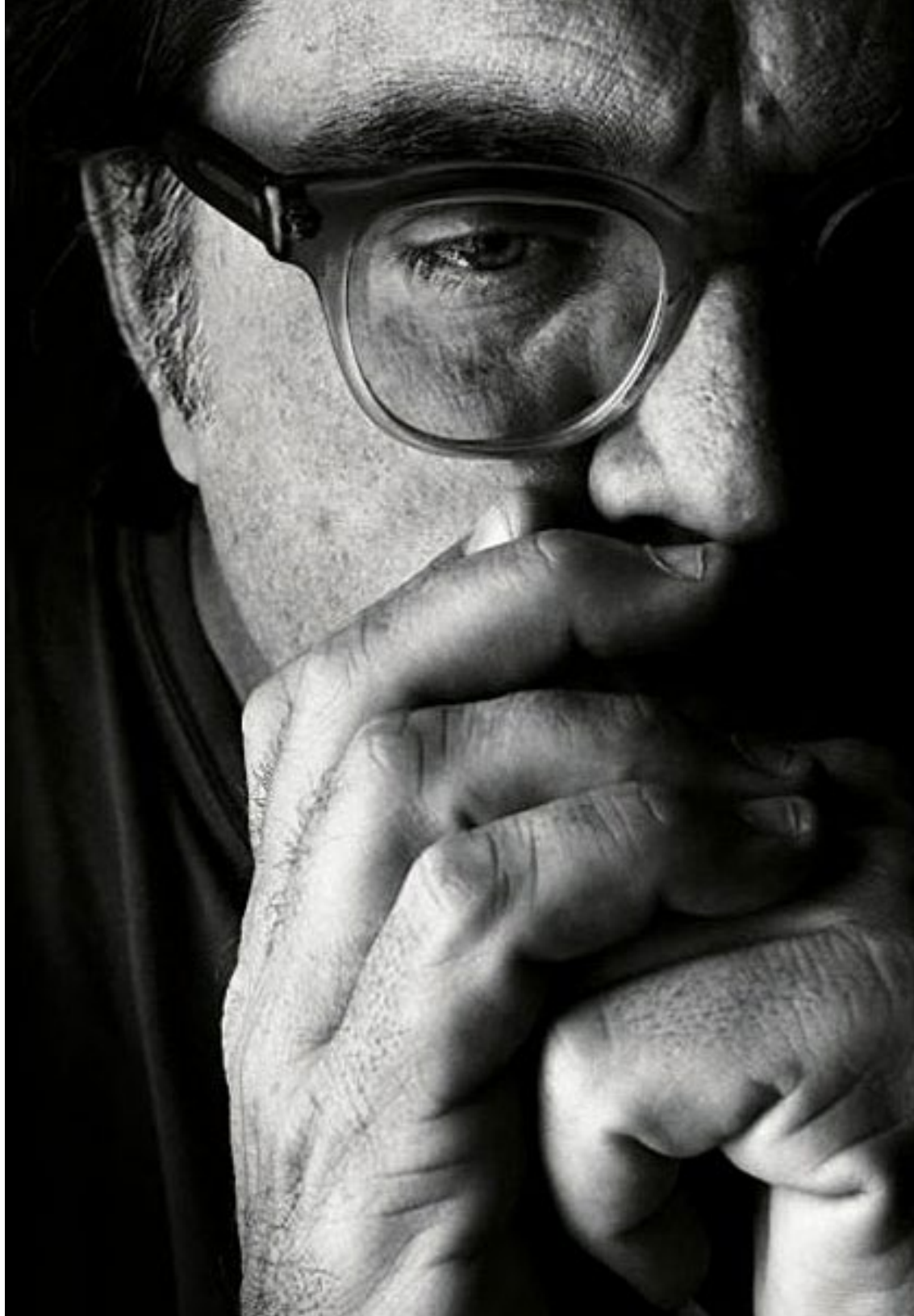


MARK PELLINGTON

DIRECTOR

Mark Pellington is a filmmaker, artist, and single dad. He worked at MTV from 1984-1990 and is widely regarded as being instrumental in creating “the MTV look”. Regarded as one of the world’s foremost music video directors, his legendary video for Pearl Jam’s “Jeremy” won four MTV awards in 1993, including Best Director and Video of the Year. Pellington has worked with such musical artists as U2, Demi Lovato, Foo Fighters, Nine Inch Nails, Michael Jackson, Public Enemy, Moby, Flaming Lips, and Bruce Springsteen among others.

Pellington’s career directing feature films began in 1997, with *GOING ALL THE WAY*, starring Ben Affleck and Rachel Weisz, *ARLINGTON ROAD*, starring Tim Robbins and Jeff Bridges, and cult fave *THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES*, starring Richard Gere. He also directed the award-winning mini-series *The United States of Poetry* for PBS in 1995, and created the distinct look for network TV shows such as *Blindspot*, *Red Widow*, *The Enemy Within*, and *Cold Case*. Pellington has continued directing feature films such as *HENRY POOLE IS HERE*, *I MELT WITH YOU*, *THE LAST WORD*, *NOSTALGIA*, and *SURVIVE*.





EVELIN REI

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

“Dutch-born recipient of Angénieux’ Special Encouragement Award at Cannes Film Festival in 2022, which recognises next-generation, pioneering cinematographic talent. She was invited to join BAFTA’s membership as full voting member in 2021, and was hailed by British Cinematographer Magazine as part of the New Wave in 2019.

Evelin is well-known for her intuitive and distinctive approach to image creation; visceral, textured, and tenebristic. She is drawn to darker stories which unearth the complexities, psychology and fragility of our human existence, psyche, and behaviour. Evelin seeks to create bold, authentic, and strong, authored films: cinema as art form. She is currently based in London, and shoots worldwide.”

NINA MCNEELY

CHOREOGRAPHER

Nina Mcneely is a storyteller, provocateur, and a creator. She is a choreographer, visual artist, director, creative director, and animator. Nina is madly in love with people, and finds no greater pleasure than studying the human condition. In her experience, the human form in motion is both poignant and poetic, capable of expressing concepts and feelings that words simply cannot. She sees the connection and chemistry between people as an immeasurable force, containing pure electricity.

Nina's work is visceral, rebellious, rowdy - and at once introspective, delicate, and alluring. She strives to be an unknowing vessel that channels artistic expression, and a guide that may lead any willing artist towards their own truth. As an avid believer in Magick, Nina has a keen eye for those who contain it. She prides herself in her preparedness, attention to detail, and work ethic - she never shies from a challenge. Throughout her career, Nina has been fortunate to work with Björk, Gaspar Noé, The Weeknd, Rihanna, Foo Fighters, Sam Smith, Alicia Keyes and black midi to name a few - all legends in their own right.



PROLIFIC ARTS & DONNYBROOK FILMS

DANCERS - MAIJA KNAPP, RYAN SPENCER, BLAKE

MILLER, ALLISON FLETCHER,

DANNY AXLEY, & COURTNEY SCARR

CHOREOGRAPHY - NINA MCNEELY

MAKEUP FX - BLAKE ARMSTRONG

EDITING - SERGIO PINHEIRO

CINEMATOGRAPHY - EVELIN VAN REI

MUSIC - PETE ADAMS

ADDITIONAL MUSIC - JEFF RONA,

TOMANDANDY, BIG BLACK DELTA, JON AVARESE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER - PHIL RIND

PRODUCERS - MARK PELLINGTON, DANA

MARSHALL, NINA MCNEELY

DIRECTED BY MARK PELLINGTON





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