

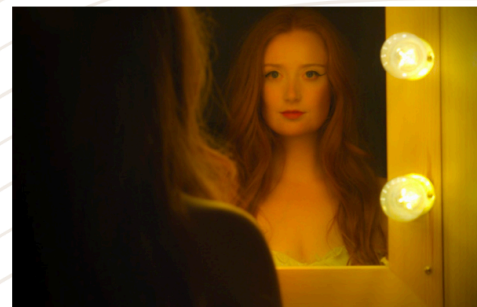
THE LAST SONG OF THE SWANS

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR

REVIEW

ÒRAN NA H-EALA A FILM BY STEVE EXETER

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR



"Òran na h-Eala" film scene

THE LAST SONG OF THE SWANS

This title is of Scottish Gaelic origin and means "Swan's Song", according to a legend, swans would emit a beautiful song before their death. It is a metaphor referring to the last attempt of an artist to do something great before their death or to express the final great works in some career or any social sphere. It is the belief that a white swan lived all his life twittering without much beauty and would only perform a grandiose song before its death.

This expression is said to have been first used by Socrates before he killed himself by taking a hemlock. Plato wrote, being Socrates' last sentence: "When they feel the hour of death approaching, these birds, which during life were already singing, then exhibit the most splendid, most beautiful song, they are happy to go to meet the god of whom they are the servants. (...) I personally do not believe that they sing from sadness; I believe, on the contrary, that, being the birds of Apollo, the swans possess a divinatory gift and, as they sense the joys they would enjoy in Hades, they sing, on that day, more joyfully than ever." - Living History. Year X, #210, p13.

The short film (which for me is experimental because of the way the images, sounds, and characters are presented) tells us the story of the dancer Moira Shearer, incredibly played by actress Shannon Davidson. Moira receives an invitation to star as an actress but prefers to die dancing because it is her greatest passion in life.

Steve Exeter, the director, writer, and producer, pays homage to the feature film "The Red Shoes" (1948), a musical, directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger and based on the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale of the same name. In this 1940s film,

Vicky (Moira Shearer) promises to be a great ballerina. When she falls in love with Julian, a composer. Her manager does not like their relationship, and she is torn between her career and her love.

The biggest highlight of this short film is Shannon's performance and the great resemblance to actress Moira Shearer, who plays the ballerina in the original 1948 film. All the light work, music (Mike Lukey), sets, costumes, and makeup (Nicola Thomson) are very well done to give the mood of "The Red Shoes" movie.

The editing by Garry Maddison makes the necessary cuts to give momentum to the story. Thomas Dobbie's photography creates an important magic giving an atmosphere of folklore, of an old tale being told.

We are all driven to make decisions in life and are often torn between emotion and reason, and the big lesson we take away is that there should always be a balance between these two states of the soul. Angels only fly with both wings in action.

Other works by the director: the comedy thriller "Full Bodied" (in production), the Roman series: "SEVERUS: The Black Caesar" (2021), Acupressure (2000), and Grave Misconduct (1991).



The director Steve Exeter