

Podtalk: Co-Directors David & Nathan Zellner Rescues the Western in ‘Damsel’

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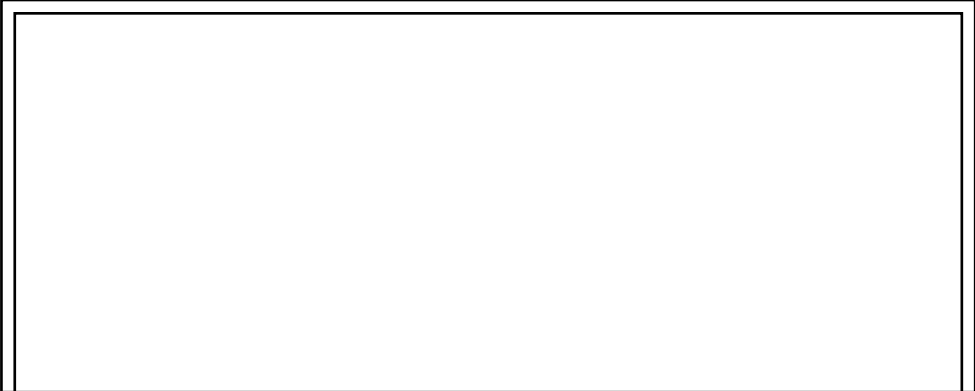
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CHICAGO – The familiar archetypes of the Hollywood Western... the dusty town, the swinging saloon doors and the cowboys looking the part... are all present and accounted for in “Damsel,” written and directed by David and Nathan Zellner (“Kumiko, the Treasure Hunter”). The twist comes in the action of the characters, portrayed by Robert Pattinson (“Twilight”), Mia Wasikowska (“Alice in Wonderland”) and the Zellners themselves.



Mia Wasikowska and Robert Pattinson of ‘Damsel’
Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics

“Damsel” opens on a typical Western-style hoedown, in which Penelope (Wasikowska) and Samuel (Pattinson) seem very connected, possibly in love. The scene shifts to Samuel returning to the territory to marry Penelope, even bringing along a miniature pony named Butterscotch as a gift.





David and Nathan Zellner of ‘Damsel’

Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

Samuel meets a false preacher named Henry (David Zellner) – who took his religious persona from the Old Preacher (Robert Forster) – and recruits the fraud to officiate the marriage. The Old West being what it was, sometimes the best laid plans don’t turn out as expected, especially when there are characters like mountain man Rufus (Nathan Zellner) in the way.

The Zellner brothers are doing their first film as co-directors, their second as collaborators (they also co-wrote “Kumiko...”), and have worked together/apart in producer and actor roles. They grew up in Colorado, and prefer the great outdoors for film settings, which created the scope of this western. David Zellner also was a sensation at the recent 2018 Tribeca Film Festival in New York City, where he starred in “Ghostbox Cowboy.”

In PART ONE of a Podtalk with Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, David and Nathan Zellner expound upon Western motifs in “Damsel,” and David explains what he expanded upon in the role of the false preacher.

PART TWO begins with Nathan Zellner, talking about his role as “mountain man” Rufus, and both talk about the feminist persona of the Penelope character, and previous movie characters in film history that would fit into the atmosphere of “Damsel.”

“Damsel” continues its nationwide release in Chicago (locally at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 North Southport) on June 29th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Robert Pattinson, Mia Wasikowska, Robert Forster. David Zellner and Nathan Zellner. Written and Directed by David Zellner and Nathan Zellner. Rated “R”



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By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [18]

Editor and Film Writer

HollywoodChicago.com

pat@hollywoodchicago.com [17]

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