



# VICTORIA

GERMANY 138 MIN

SEBASTIAN SCHIPPER

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Structurally, *Victoria* will intrigue cinephiles: The whole movie — all two hours and 18 minutes of it — was shot in a single take.

But most moviegoers aren't wowed by formal feats alone. The good news is that with or without the crazy, single-shot experiment, the German drama is thrilling.

As the film opens, we see a crowd of blurry dancers, moving to the beat of a Berlin dance club. Eventually, one woman comes into focus: Victoria (Laia Costa), a recent transplant from Madrid. She's by herself in the club and doesn't speak German well, which hampers her ability to make friends. But just as she's preparing to leave, a young man, Sonne (Frederick Lau), strikes up conversation. He's also heading out, and asks Victoria to join him and his three friends for another drink. Against her better judgment — it's 4 a.m., after all, and she has to work at 7 — she agrees.

Thus begins the first act of a movie made up of two very distinct parts. The first is a meet-cute, but with unsettling undertones. The flirtation between Victoria and Sonne is goofy and sweet, yet there's something alarming about the situation in which the young woman has placed herself. Suddenly, she's alone on a rooftop with four men she doesn't know, and they have the ability to communicate with each other, in German, without her understanding.

The tone of the movie shifts completely around the halfway mark. It's best not to give too much away, but suffice it to say that the suspense ratchets up after the smitten Victoria agrees to help the men on a dangerous errand.

The logistics must have been harrowing, as the camera captures both intimate scenes — including a moving exchange during which Victoria plays the piano for Sonne — and action-packed ones. There's a shootout, a chase and multiple trips up and down staircases and ladders. Most amazingly, the filmmaking doesn't call attention to itself, despite its strictures. The story is that engrossing. As a rule, the chaotic movements of the camera suit the narrative, except for several dark, pre-dawn scenes in which it's difficult to discern what's happening.

The acting, especially by Costa, is first rate. Exuding both a childlike openness and a tendency toward the recklessness of young adulthood, the actress backs up even her character's most questionable choices with conviction. Victoria may be at the center of an outlandishly staged gimmick, but she feels utterly without artifice.

**Stephanie Merry, Washington Post**

**WRITERS:** Sebastian Schipper, Olivia Neergaard-Holm, Eike Frederik Schulz **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Sturla Brandth Grøvlen **MUSIC:** Nils Frahm  
*Victoria* Laia Costa | *Sonne* Frederick Lau | *Boxer* Franz Rogowski | *Blinker* Burak Yigit

VOTING FOR *Rams* A76 | B55 | C6 | D0 | E0 | Rating 87.8% | Attendance 147

Our next screening | **The Club** | Tuesday 7 February 2017. 8.00pm

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