

MIRA

a film by EVA LOUISE HALL



LOGLINE

'Mira' is an 11-minute stop-motion animated surrealist horror film that tells the story of a struggling accordionist who seeks recognition from a charismatic otherworldly singer whose success lies in harming and manipulating others for her own personal gain.



MIRA (2023)

<i>Running Time:</i>	11:30 mins
<i>Category:</i>	Short Narrative Film
<i>Country of Production:</i>	USA
<i>Language:</i>	English
<i>Screen Ratio:</i>	16:9
<i>Audio:</i>	Stereo
<i>Medium(s):</i>	Stop Motion (various) 2D Digital Mixed Media
<i>Story and Animation:</i>	Eva Louise Hall
<i>Musical Direction and Score:</i>	Calvin Arsenia
<i>Composer (Mira's Theme):</i>	Erica Marie Mancini



SYNOPSIS

Ready to quit her dreams of becoming a celebrated accordionist after busking day after day for an isolating swamp metropolis that isn't listening, young Mira finally gets a taste of recognition one evening when she meets Lore; a charismatic and successful performer who takes an interest in Mira's talents.

Giving into her charm and status, Mira finds herself playing hostess to the mysterious and talented singer as Lore's self-serving behaviors make her increasingly more uncomfortable in her own home. Mira's desire for recognition from this elevated musician leaves her blinded to Lore's hidden intentions until her apartment begins changing around her and her anxieties start to spiral out of her control. Her inability to confront and remove the ever-dangerous Lore proves to have monstrous consequences once Lore shows her true sinister nature; that she is not the musical ally that she initially presents to Mira but a water demon who needs to scavenge and carve out a place for herself by taking advantage of others.

After Mira tries to escape, Lore cruelly adheres her to her beloved accordion, encasing her arms to the instrument's keys and sewing her lungs into to the accordion bellows. She must keep playing the instrument in order to breathe. Mira, entrapped by this demonic entity, is left with her home and sense of self forever changed.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Mira is a film about abusive creative relationships – how artistic aspirations and kindness can be weaponized through the sinister motivations of those in positions of power.

This story touches on themes of celebrity, abusive individuals and relationships, self-sacrifice and the loss of power and control. I am making this film out of a love I have for accordions, sea monsters, animation and surrealist horror film. In bringing this story to life I also wanted to express my personal experience in dealing with how horrific it feels when someone, through their abuse of others, can turn something you love more than anything into a living nightmare.

I made the majority of this film through moments of great pain and tremendous joy, alone and isolated in my small studio in Kansas City, Missouri between January of 2020 and the Spring of 2023. It is a film that, like my character Mira, has endured unexpected hardship and tremendous obstacles in the pursuit of creative accomplishment. The overwhelming support I received in developing and in the completion of this film, however, has ensured a much happier ending for its production.

Through the contemplation of the dark and horrific it is my hope that we may expand our understanding and capacity for cultivating beauty and kindness.

-ELH



CREDITS

Animation + Direction:

Eva Louise Hall

Musical Direction + Score:

Calvin Arsenia

Story + Concept:

Eva Louise Hall

Composer (Mira's Theme):

Erica Marie Mancini

Design + Lettering:

Christine Dong

Fabrication Assistance:

**Theodore Bunch
Christine Dong**

Animator (2D Charcoal Seq):

Mira Taliaferro

Recording + Foley:

**Calvin Arsenia
Ground Control Studio NYC**

Audio Mastering:

Ashley Miller



CAST

Mira

Lore

Young Mira

Musical Performances:

Vanessa Severo

Jessica Paige

Ava Armstrong

Erica Marie Mancini (Accordion)

Calvin Arsenia (Harp, various)

Simon Huntley (Bones)

Laurel Parks (Fiddle)

Brandon J. (Flute)





Calvin Arsenia *Musical Direction + Score*

Singer, harpist, and author **CALVIN ARSENIA** has built a reputation for turning the arts world on its head. Voted Kansas City's Best Musician 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 (PitchKC), and featured on Billboard.com, NPR.org, NEWNOWNEXT, Pride.com, and GRAMMY.com, Arsenia's angelic stylings on voice and harp create rare harmonies and arrangements that look past the boundaries of his traditional gospel and classical upbringing. Known for his elaborate and ceremonious sensory concert experiences that merge jazz and electronic influences, "Calvin has consistently deliver(s) genre-bending (and gender-bending) shows that tackle sexuality, religion, and race in a stunningly unorthodox manner - somewhere between sacred and sacrilege." A healthy serving of indie rock, neo-soul, R&B, and a splash of art pop, this multi-instrumentalist singer songwriter is a shimmering force to be reckoned with.



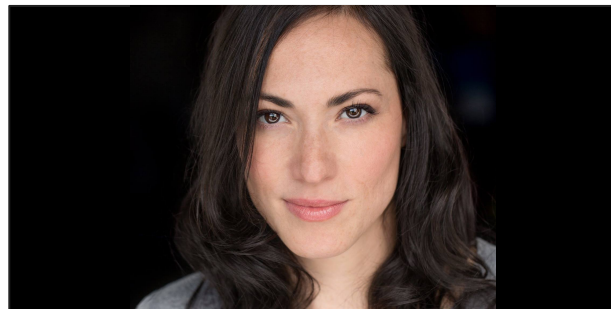
Erica Marie Mancini *Composer, Mira's Theme*

ERICA MARIE MANCINI is a freelance multi-instrumentalist (accordion/vocals/percussion/keys) based in NYC. She has been featured on screen (John Oliver Show), and on stage for various theatrical productions (David Catán's *Il Postino* and Brecht's *Happy End*, both produced by The New School, various Speakeasy Dollhouse productions, Marcia Milgrom Dodge's *Evita* at Riverside Theater, *Brecht in Exile* with The Irondale Ensemble, and more). Mancini plays in several bands, ranging in style from avant-garde, experimental, and free improvisation to polka, county, klezmer, and tango. She can be found performing everywhere from Lincoln Center, accordion festivals, and small clubs, to DIY art parties in Brooklyn warehouses and even cemeteries. In addition to performing with several bands, she also has an original music project, called Ghost Pony (psychedelic space spaghetti western), and also is constantly expanding her use of electronics with the accordion to create original works. Erica also has developed a unique circus act where she performs on aerial silks with her accordion.

Vanessa Severo

Voice of Mira

Vanessa Severo has studied at Missouri State University as well as The American Conservatory Theatre, San Francisco. She is the recipient of the TCG 11th Round of the Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowships, 2017. She has performed for the past 13 seasons at The Kansas City Repertory Theatre, and is certified in Suzuki Method, and Viewpoints under the instruction of Ellen Lauren, SITl company. She is the playwright and actor of "Frida... A Self Portrait" (2020 Kilroys' List); a one woman production about the tumultuous and brilliant life of Frida Kahlo. Vanessa is passionate about utilizing the element of Suzuki method in her work to challenge the boundaries of storytelling, and explore the depths of movement, composition, and the power of stillness. <http://vanessasevero.com>



Jessica Paige

Voice of Lore

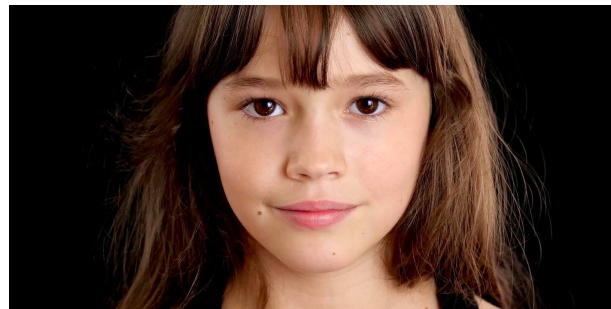
Jessica Paige brings the roots of her rural Kansas childhood to life with heartfelt, folksy lyricism contrasted by her huge voice and personality. Jessica wavers between the influences of powerhouse voices like Janis Joplin and Brandi Carlile to the sultry and delicate inflections of Norah Jones and Jeff Buckley, a true master of vocal range and emotion. A three time semi-finalist on American Idol, twice voted "Best Vocalist" in Kansas City, TEDxKC Artist, Folk Alliance International Showcase Artist, featured vocalist with the Kansas City Jazz Orchestra, Jessica has become one of Kansas City's most respected musicians and band leaders. <http://jesspaige.com/>



Ava Armstrong

Voice of Young Mira

As an experienced up-and-coming actress and performer, 'Young Mira' marks Ava's debut role in contributing her talents to film and animation.



EVA LOUISE HALL

ARTIST BIO

Eva Louise Hall is an animator, filmmaker, fabricator and performer in the Kansas City, MO working in both commercial and fine art contexts. Her projects as a visual storyteller create unique experiences that engage audiences, inspire participation and build community. As an interdisciplinary artist, her work involves everything from giant puppetry, multi-media performance, animated and live action film production and arts education. In addition to the creation of her independent films she teaches as an Assistant Professor of Animation at the Kansas City Art Institute.

Mira is Eva Louise Hall's most recent stop motion story within more than a decade-long career working with puppets and animation. Other notable projects include *The Weathering* (2019) and *Nautical Apsara* (2013).

