

Right: (L to R) Director Rudolf Mestdagh and DP Danny Elsen on the set of *Ellektra*.

Rudolf Mestdagh, the renowned Flemish Director, has many commercials to his credit, not to mention documentaries, shorts, and television films, including two episodes of the Channel 4 TV series, **Lock, Stock**, produced by Guy Ritchie. **Ellektra**, an episodic comedy-noir in French, set in Brussels, marks his first venture into feature films. He co-wrote the story and screenplay with Daniel Lamberts, then planned, produced and directed the film over a two year period.

A Belgian, Dutch and German co-production, **Ellektra** relates the surreal story of several people who have little in common with each other, but are involved in a tragic accident in which they lose their most valuable gift in life. One by one, they receive mysterious consoling text messages from a stranger named Ellektra, a young girl who brings them together and offers them solace and hope. Starring Gert Portael, Matthias Schoenaerts,



It was nice to use a cinematographic approach that fits the story and gives a 'now' look to the visual style" notes Elsen, who admits he's always liked to play with colours and moods. "But the long shoot, the large number of locations and the low budget of \$1.5 million, meant that we all had to work like crazy."

With an Aaton 35mm 3 perf fitted with Zeiss lenses, Elsen selected Kodak VISION2

*"The stock looks great when you pull on it, which certainly helped me with the tricky four minute handheld shot."*

**Ellektra** is co-produced by CosmoKino of Brussels, Ijswater Films and Schmidt-Katze Filmkollektiv, with the support of Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds, Nederlands Fonds Voor de Film, Mitteldeutsche Medienforderung and Eurimages, and the participation of VRT and Canal Plus Flanders. The film's sponsors comprise Apple, De Morgan, Sony Ericsson, Motorola, Veuve Cliquot and D'leteren. It is being distributed in Belgium by Kinopolis Film Distribution. International sales are handled by Intramovies in Italy. ■

# Electrifying Ellektra

The surreal story of several people who are involved in a tragic accident in which they lose their most valuable gift in life.

Julian Schoenaerts and singer Axelle Red in her screen debut, the film was shot in 52 days in over 80 different locations in Brussels, Ghent, and Puerto Rico.

## Colour mix

Mestdagh chose Danny Elsen (**The Alzheimer Case** and **Blood Marriage**), his long-term collaborator, as Director of Photography on **Ellektra**. "We had planned to apply different colours to each character in the film, as well as specific contrasts, angles and viewpoints. The leading character was quite dark, so we put in cool blue; the lunatic guy, we did in green; the hysterical actress, brown and yellow; and the strip dancer who wants to be famous, orange and red. We also started and ended the film with a mix of the different colours.

500T 5218. "The stock looks great when you pull on it, which certainly helped me with the tricky four minute handheld shot. My stops were mostly between f2.8 and f4 and, thanks to 5218, I could create a broader look which allowed me to go in different colour directions in grading and manipulate tiny differences in colour." Elsen opted for Koopmedia in Berlin for the digital post-production work, after his positive experience with them on **The Alzheimer Case**.

"Working with Danny is always an outstanding experience," notes Mestdagh. "We've been on 12 projects together, from shorts (**Robokip**) to documentaries (**John Cassavetes**) and various commercials. Danny brings an energy to the set which is remarkable. It even makes you like life in the trenches for a while!"

## Crew List – Ellektra

**Co-Writer, Director & Producer** Rudolf Mestdagh  
**Co-Producers** Marc Bary (Ijswater Films)  
 Leander Carell (Schmidt-Katze Filmkollektiv)  
**Director of Photography** Danny Elsen  
 A CosmoKino, Ijswater Films & Schmidt-Katze Filmkollektiv Co-Production

