

Armando  
Leduci

**Making  
an impact in the  
movie industry**

*By Dean M. Shapiro*

With the advent of modern digital technology and rapidly increasing avenues of distribution, today's film industry is undergoing a radical transformation and Armando Leduc is moving along with the times.

The 41-year-old New Orleans-based filmmaker, actor, singer, dancer and head of his own namesake production company is making a name for himself in nearly all facets of the motion picture industry. His body of work includes full-length features, shorts, music videos and even wedding videos and commercials for a wide range of businesses. After more than 20 years in the entertainment business, he has learned to roll with the times and get his name and his work out to the public in a wide range of creative ways.

"The whole market is changing because of the COVID-19," Armando observed. "A lot of the movies that were slated to go to theaters that have been closed during the pandemic are now going to on-demand, home-viewing channels like Netflix or Amazon or Hulu. Distribution is radically changing."

So, for those filmmakers who have a movie to sell, Armando advises, "You have to make sure that you're packaging the movie properly. You've got to make sure you have some big names attached."

Armando should know. He learned these lessons back in the late 2000s when he appeared in a locally produced movie titled "Girls Gone Gangsta." The finished product had a small role for John Goodman and yet it prominently featured Goodman's name in the marketing and promotion of the film, including on the DVD wrapper. "That really helped us sell the project," Armando said.

One of his best-known works was an hour-long video production titled "Bourbon Whiz" (2012), a humorous and

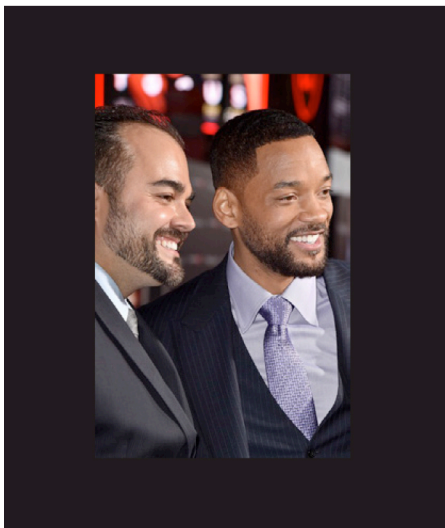


*Armando Leduc and Nicolas Cage*

somewhat bawdy parody of "The Wizard of Oz" shot almost entirely in New Orleans with a local cast and crew. Making the rounds of ComicCon shows around the U.S., Armando proudly noted that he sold over 3,000 copies of the DVD at a



*Photos of Armando Leduc and friends*



*Armando Leduc and Will Smith*

price nearly fifteen times what he paid to have the DVDs copied and packaged. Most of the money he made on these sales and others he put back into his company, Armando added.

“Bourbon Whiz” went on to win four major awards at the 2014 Louisiana Independent Film Festival, including Best Film. Other awards Armando has won include Audience Choice in the 48-Hour Film Project for “Mr. Right Now” and Best Screenplay for “Chronicles of Count Carlos” at the New Orleans Film Festival Pitchfest (2015).

Armando’s story begins in Nuremberg, Germany where he was born on an American army base and spent the first 12 years of his life. His European upbringing, he said, gave him a firsthand perspective of the filmmaking techniques employed on that continent which, he noted, are very different in many ways from American filmmaking.

Over the years Armando moved around with his family from one army base to another eventually landing in Fort Gordon, Georgia where his talents as a singer and dancer began to shine. He participated in dance competitions throughout the South, opened his own dance studio and sang with a local band. He eventually landed in New Orleans in 2005, shortly before the city was hit by Hurricane Katrina.

Once New Orleans began to recover from the flood damage, Armando’s career as an actor began to blossom. He appeared in a wide range of film and TV productions and eventually started his own production company. In that capacity, he began a series of video ventures he titled “Sketchy Characters,” of which “Bourbon Whiz” was one of the more recent of his creations.

Also in recent years, as an actor, Armando has been in or is currently appearing in a wide variety of TV show episodes, including “Queen of the South,” “Queen Sugar,” “NCIS New Orleans,” “Treme” and others. Currently he is in pre-production for a horror film on which he hopes to start shooting in the fall. The working title, he divulged, is “Malice” but he politely declined to discuss any details beyond “trying to decide whether I want to make it a dark comedy or if I want to make it just as a horror movie by itself.”

A casual observation of Armando’s body of work appears to show a decided preference for lighthearted, comedic projects. When asked about it, he acknowledged that, “Yes, I like the wackiness; the Will Ferrell type of stuff. I really enjoy making those kinds of films.”

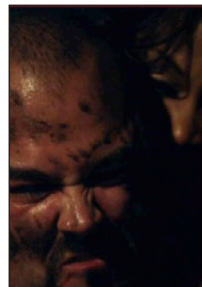
That love for comedy and wackiness also extends to the music videos that Armando and his collaborator, Keith Manasco, have been producing lately. Most recently they include a COVID-19 parody album that is currently showing on YouTube.

Looking toward the future, Armando observed, “The landscape has been changing. New rules are being written every day,

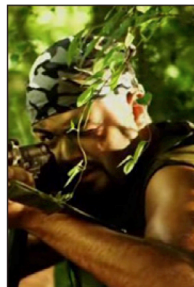
as to what it is, what it’s not. What’s in and what’s not. A lot of what’s in now is all about who your followers are; who are the subscribers to your social media channels. All of that stuff plays a role in distribution and how you get casting projects and all that.

And then, looking at the present through a historical perspective, Armando compared the current pandemic to the one that occurred in 1918 and what immediately followed it. “You look back at the Roaring ‘20s and you think about the music that came out of that time. The art, the films, etcetera. That pandemic changed the landscape and so I think we’re going to see the same thing again this time around.”

Attributing the cultural blossoming of the 1920s to people having more time to create while under quarantine, Armando added, “I’m seeing that myself. I’ve had more time to write and create and self-reflect because I’m not at the grind every day. So I think if a lot of creative people take advantage of this, we’re going to start to see a lot of amazing art coming out. That’s what I’m excited about.”



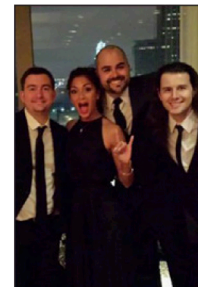
*Armando Leduc*



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*Armando Leduc and friends*

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