

Celebs turn out to empower women in theater, film

Chriqui, Livingston want to bring female talent to the forefront



From left, Elizabeth Hayes (associate producer, publicist "Rachel Getting Married"), Neda Armian (producer, "F granddaugher and writer, "Rachel Getting Married") and Victoria Pettibone, program moderator and co-founder lecture and Q&A in May.

Giacinta Pace

Takers



By Giacinta Pace

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Cause Celeb highlights a celebrity's work on behalf of a specific cause. This week, we speak with actress Emmanuelle Chriqui and actor Ron Livingston about [Women's Expressive Theater \(WET\)](#). They attended WET's annual benefit, [Stars Give Love](#), on April 19 in New York City, hosted by the [Angel Orensanz Foundation](#). The awards benefit honored women who change the way the world sees women, followed by a one-night only performance of short plays written by women. This year, Nora Ephron, director of "Julie & Julia," presented the We Empower Together award to [Lynda Obst](#). Maria Zuckerman, vice president of HBO Films, received the Risk Taker Award.

WET strives to empower women and girls by making media productions that change stereotypes and advocate for equality. Their [Risk Takers Series](#) is a free program in New York City for girls age 13 to 19 to help them learn about communication, leadership, and media-literacy skills. Another WET program is the [The INKubator: WET FILMS & WET PLAYS](#), where writers have their work reviewed by WET's development team and producers and performed in public readings attended by insiders in the theater and entertainment industry.

Chriqui has appeared in multiple films and television shows including "You Don't Mess with Zohan" and "Entourage." She also performed in one of the plays at the Stars Give Love benefit.

Livingston has appeared in shows like "Sex and the City" and "Band of Brothers" and appears in the film "Dinner for Schmucks." He also participated in one of the plays at the Stars Give Love benefit.

Q: Can you tell me what this event and this organization means to women, especially in a year where Kathryn Bigelow became the first woman to be awarded an Academy Award for Directing at the Oscars?

Chriqui: It's exactly that. We're really about trying to bring women to the forefronts, as directors, as playwrights, as actors. Just everything, women have such a voice, something to share. I think by Kathryn Bigelow winning that Oscar, we can see that, "Yeah, women can do it." Women can do a guys film and kill it. Women can do anything!

So it's really lovely, because this mission is really about empowering women and empowering young girls as the charity portion of it. I just really believe in it, because, as wonderful as this business is, it's a male-dominated industry and it's very difficult. You read these wonderful scripts and you get all excited, and they're like, "Well, we have to see who the male lead is first," and you're like, "really?" When is that going to change? Or, "That movie will never work, it's two female leads." That is heartbreaking to me.

Unless you're like a super-uber ridiculous star, you almost don't stand a chance. By coming out tonight, by supporting it and supporting the new directors, the new playwrights, and celebrating the women, it really gives us a chance to make a difference.



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Emmanuelle Chriqui attended the annual WET benefit on April 19.

Ron Livingston

Q: Can you tell me about why you decided to come out tonight and what you've seen in your own experience of women in the industry?

Livingston: I'm here tonight because my wife told me to... No, I think what WET Productions is about is trying to get more of women's voices into entertainment. Not just up front, but sort of behind-the-scenes and in the writing. We're here to read some work written by women. The organization does what they can to try to create opportunities and offer mentorships and get the women who are successful in the industry to do their part to shepherd young talent along.

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