

MATT WHELAN
ROXANE MESQUIDA
PANA HEMA-TAYLOR

THE MOST FUN YOU CAN HAVE DYING

LIVE LIFE. ASK QUESTIONS LATER.

CHOCOLATE FISH PICTURES IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE NEW ZEALAND FILM COMMISSION DIGIFILM CHARLOTTE LARSEN SOUTHERN LIGHT FILMS AND HERMAFILM PRESENTS "THE MOST FUN YOU CAN HAVE DYING" FEATURING MATT WHELAN ROXANE MESQUIDA PANA HEMA-TAYLOR
CREATED BY MIKE DWYER & MATT DWYER COSTUME DESIGNER LIZ MCGREGOR MAKE UP DESIGNER DEB WATSON EXEC PRODUCER KRISTIAN EER COMPOSER GRAYSON GILMOUR COSTUME DESIGNER PETER ROBERTS PRODUCTION DESIGNER BRUCE EVERARD DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY CRIGTON BONE BASED ON THE NOVEL "BERNHAM BLUES" BY STEVEN GRANNAPWAY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER TRIMITY WHITE PRODUCED BY ALEX COLE-BAKER WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY KRISTIN MARCON



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THE MOST FUN YOU CAN HAVE DYING

Written and directed by Kirstin Marcon

Produced by Alex Cole-Baker

PRESS KIT

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| TITLE: | The Most Fun You Can Have Dying |
| STARRING: | Matt Whelan, Roxane Mesquida and Pana Hema-Taylor |
| DIRECTOR: | Kirstin Marcon |
| PRODUCER: | Alex Cole-Baker |
| SCREENPLAY: | Kirstin Marcon (based on the novel <i>Seraphim Blues</i> , by Steven Gannaway.) |
| EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: | Timothy White |
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| IN ASSOCIATION WITH: | The New Zealand Film Commission, Southern Light Films, and Heimatfilm |
| CINEMATOGRAPHER: | Crighton Bone |
| EDITOR: | Peter Roberts |
| MUSIC COMPOSER: | Grayson Gilmour |
| PRODUCTION DESIGNER: | Bruce Everard |
| COSTUME DESIGNER: | Liz McGregor |
| MAKE-UP DESIGNER: | Deb Watson |
| THE SHOOT: | Shot in Auckland, Hamilton, Cambridge and Raglan, New Zealand; and London, Paris, Monreal, Mayen, Berlin, Munich, Nice, Monaco, Milan, Venice and Hong Kong |
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short synopsis

Michael's in a race against time after learning he has only months to live. Stealing his own treatment money, he leaves his loved ones behind and heads to London. Intent on going out in a blur of sex, drugs and mayhem, everything changes when he falls for a mysterious French girl named Sylvie.

mid synopsis

Michael has life pretty sweet. His girlfriend adores him, his best mate David is loyal to the end, plus David's girlfriend doesn't mind a quick hook-up either.

But Michael's self-regarding lifestyle comes crashing down when he is diagnosed with a terminal illness. Desperate not to let his life just fade away, Michael steals the \$200,000 raised for his treatment, and catches a one-way flight to London.

He isn't there for long before his nerve and sense of humour earn him a vicious beating in a back alley. Waking up cold and bloodied, he finds himself being watched over by the ethereal Sylvie; a mysterious French drifter. They fall head over heels in love, and attempt to outrun death itself.



Matt Whelan (Michael) and Roxane Mesquida (Sylvie) on location in the Palais de Tokyo, Paris.

full synopsis

Michael is a good-looking 20-something living in a grungy flat in Hamilton, New Zealand. He has a gorgeous girl-friend, a solid best mate in his flatmate David, and he even gets on OK with his Dad, his mother having died when he was young.

So his world comes crashing down when he is diagnosed with a terminal illness. There is experimental treatment available, but the cost is \$200,000. Instead of taking the path of healthy living Michael steps his party lifestyle up a notch, drinking to oblivion, taking drugs, even hooking up with his best friend's girlfriend.

Yet he underestimates the generosity of his extended family and hometown. They raise the \$200,000 and put it into the trust of a local lawyer. Unable to tolerate the lack of control he feels over his life, late one night Michael corners the lawyer, convincing him to put the money into Michael's own account. This is so Michael can 'keep his dignity', by writing his own cheque for his treatment.

The instant the money is transferred, Michael is gone.

He flies to Hong Kong where he procures a counterfeit passport (with complimentary tattoo) and travels to London. Now completely alone, his headlong course continues. He drinks and flirts his way into a fearsome beating after chatting up the wrong girl over a game of pool. He wakes, bloodied and sore, in a cold back alley to find himself being watched over by Sylvie; a beautiful French drifter.

They have an instant connection and hit the road together. They travel to Paris, then range further out across wintertime Europe. In this swirling backdrop of snow and stone Sylvie and Michael fall in love.

But there are consequences for trying to outrun death. And Michael is starting to see that Sylvie has her own secrets.



Matt Whelan (Michael) and Roxane Mesquida (Sylvie) on location in Germany.

about the film

The Most Fun You Can Have Dying is an audacious love story written and directed by debut feature filmmaker Kirstin Marcon and produced by Alex Cole-Baker.

The story sees handsome young Hamilton man Michael (Matt Whelan) discover some devastating news. He only has a few months to live. Desperate to live fast and die young, he steals the money raised for his treatment, setting off a chain of events which find him taking comfort in the arms of a sensuous young French woman, Sylvie, half-way around the world.

The film is based on the well-reviewed 2003 debut novel '*Seraphim Blues*', written by Steven Gannaway.

The film stars Matt Whelan, the winner of the 2010 Qantas Film & Television Awards Best Supporting Actor award for popular TV series, *Go Girls*, and a lead actor of New Zealand feature *My Wedding and Other Secrets*, in his most challenging role to date.

Whelan is joined by French actress Roxane Mesquida who co-stars as Sylvie. Two of her most recent films, *Rubber* (writer/director Quentin Dupieux) and *Kaboom* (writer/director Gregg Araki) were officially selected to screen in the Cannes Film Festival 2010.

Also in the cast are New Zealand actors Pana Hema-Taylor (*BOY*) who plays Michael's best friend David, and Colin Moy (*In My Father's Den*). The support ensemble also includes Sophie Henderson (*Outrageous Fortune*), Caren Pistorious (*Legend of The Seeker*), Matthew Saville, Paul MacDiarmid, Maggie Tarver and newcomer, Maori Samoan teenager Clementine Howe.

The feature is a debut for both writer/director Kirstin Marcon and producer Alex Cole-Baker. *The Most Fun You Can Have Dying* has been a seven-year project for the pair. Executive Producer Timothy White (*Out of the Blue*, *Number Two*, *Mister Pip*) joined the team early on, bringing an experienced hand to the project.

German company Heimatfilm joined the project as service production company, and worked to pull together the teams for the European shoot. Well known for their work with Lars von Trier, they have also produced many successful features including *Lemon Tree* (winner of the Audience Award, Panorama, Berlin 2008), *Süt-Milk* (in competition, Venice 2008), and *Bal-Honey* (winner of the Golden Bear, Berlin 2010).

Also bringing their talent and experience to the film were award-winning cinematographer Crighton Bone, production designer Bruce Everard, costume designer Liz McGregor and make-up designer Deb Watson. *The Most Fun You Can Have Dying* was edited by Peter Roberts with original music by young composer Grayson Gilmour from the Flying Nun label.

The Most Fun You Can Have Dying has been developed and financed by the New Zealand Film Commission and private equity investors Digifilm and Charlotte Larsen.

inspiration

For writer/director Kirstin Marcon the inspiration for the film came after a bad day in the office. On the way home from work she went to Whitcoulls looking for a story to turn into a film, and found it in Steven Gannaway's novel *Seraphim Blues*. Describing the novel as "a rush of blood to the head" Kirstin remembers having a premonition when she saw it on the shelf. "Half way down the first page I knew it was the one. I could almost taste the film I wanted to make."

Kirstin couldn't sleep and excitedly brought the novel to producer Alex Cole-Baker as the pair had been talking about the idea of doing a project together. Alex says, "I could see how serious she was so I read it over the weekend and I loved it. I loved everything about the kind of character he was and the position of moral dilemma it put me in. Then I put it down and went, 'Right, how are we going to make it?'"



Pana Hema-Taylor (David) and Matt Whelan (Michael) on location in Raglan, New Zealand.



Sophie Henderson (Tina) and Matt Whelan (Michael) at Michael's local bar, the Yellow Submarine.

telling the story

Turning the novel into a screenplay that could attract cast, crew and finance was a four-year process.

"The most obvious challenge is that the novel is written almost entirely in first person," says Kirstin. "It's a heady mental rant by the main character Michael, and written in the form of a computer diary. He tells jokes, anecdotes and in the most entertaining way leads us through the story. His point of view dominates, and because we enjoy his company - we forgive him everything."

"But capturing the spirit of the novel using voice over felt like the wrong solution. So the big job for me was creating a structure that brought a cinematic version of Michael to life - without hearing his inner voice."

"I'm a big fan of characters who don't talk about their feelings. So the film invites the audience in by watching Michael react to situations, and seeing his reactions evolve over time. As he grows and changes the audience can fall in love with him. And I love that he never complains, never feels sorry for himself."

The story is very much a New Zealand story played out on an international setting.

"The film is for people who want to live out their own fantasies of running away and falling in love, being in the world without barriers or protection," she adds.

filming

The Most Fun You Can Have Dying was shot in Europe during the northern hemisphere winter of late 2010, with the coldest recorded temperatures in 150 years. It was not what the crew were expecting at all. When confirming the locations in November it was all sunny blue skies. Three weeks later they were back: with the camera, the cast, andthe snow.

But for director Kirstin Marcon, the change in weather was an unexpected gift, "We got very lucky with the weather in terms of what you see on screen. When we went to locations initially, they were beautiful, but when we came back to shoot, blanketed with snow, they became magical. The alchemy of film making just took over and the weather gods smiled upon the film and made it more beautiful than I could have imagined."

With over 150 different scenes, the locations ranged from London to Paris, Berlin, Munich, a small German village called Monreal, as well as Milan, Monaco and Venice. The small shooting team returned from three weeks in the freezing temperatures via Hong Kong where they shot for a day and a half.

In New Zealand a five-week shoot took place in 2011 in Auckland, Hamilton, Raglan and Cambridge.

Despite such extreme circumstances Kirstin puts the stunning visual results down to the talents of cinematographer Crighton Bone. "We both wanted the film to be simply shot. There is just one tracking shot, no cranes, no helicopters, nothing over the top. Instead it's all hand-held and on sticks, and where possible he simply set the camera up, framed it beautifully and exposed the film. He also used an absolute minimum of lights and when he has used them, he's played with colour, adding a dynamic feel to the film. It changes from bright to dark, colourful to quiet, scene by scene. The one unusual thing he did, which makes a huge impact on the feeling of the film, is the constant use of slow motion. Many scenes in the film are obviously slow motion but many more are shot just off-speed to give a subliminal dreamy feel to scenes."



The crew shoot Roxane Mesquida and Matt Whelan on location in Alexanderplatz, Berlin.



Matt Whelan (Michael) and Caren Pistorius (Chloe) in Michael's bedroom.

casting

The search to find the right actor for the emotionally and physically demanding role of Michael was extensive. Auditions were held for New Zealanders and Australians and Kirstin and Alex agreed they had to look "everywhere" for their young, twenty-something actor.

But the search ended when Auckland based casting directors and brothers, Mike and Matt Dwyer put forward Matt Whelan. The young actor was fresh out of Toi Whakaari (NZ Drama School) with a minor credit in Taika Waititi's *Eagle vs Shark* (2007). As soon as he walked into the audition room Kirstin knew he was special.

"The way Matt brought Michael to life in his audition was unforgettable," says Kirstin. "His preparation for the role was epic – he thinks profoundly about the character and the story, yet on set he is able to be free, spontaneous and hugely giving to his co-stars. He throws himself into the role very deeply, sacrificing everything to be the best he can and I am so grateful to him for that."

"I love the intelligence he brings to the part, the way he physically inhabits the character and brings him to life. His Michael is a beautiful young man, complex, thinking, likable, impulsive, heart-breaking – and like most things in this film – better than I ever imagined."



Roxane Mesquida (Sylvie) on location in Monreal, Germany.

Finding a French actress to play the character of Sylvie was straightforward by comparison. Kirstin had seen Roxane Mesquida's brave performance in *À ma sœur!*, a film by French director Catherine Breillat. So (with fingers crossed) Alex sent the script to Roxane's agent, and both she and Kirstin were thrilled and honoured when Roxane agreed to be in the film.

"To be honest," Kirstin adds, "I was a little nervous about working with an international actress, but Roxane was a dream. She was easy-going, very generous as an actress, and completely charming. She is an absolute cinephile too. The on-screen chemistry between Michael and Sylvie is obvious and off-screen Roxane and Matt brought out the goofy kid in each other. After a while we all just called them 'the kids.'"

Michael's sweet and long-suffering best friend David is played by 21-year-old Pana Hema-Taylor. "Pana combines youthful energy and compelling screen presence with vulnerability and wisdom beyond his years," says Kirstin.

"Casting him was another essential decision – his gentle portrayal of David and his obvious fondness for Michael allow the audience to see there's a side to Michael initially hidden from them. Pana is a heart-throb in his own right, but as David is the perfect foil to Michael in the world of the film. Throughout the shooting process I found Pana's insights into David and the script blew me away."

Pana Hema-Taylor (David) and Matt Whelan (Michael) in an intense moment.



pre production

Also working hard to bring the film to life were a design team under the direction of prominent and talented commercials production designer Bruce Everard, also working on his first feature film. Bruce was on set working alongside his cousin, cinematographer Crighton Bone, for the first time, with the pair behaving like schoolboys between takes.

Kirstin was “absolutely stunned” by the amount of thought applied to the production design, and by the beauty of the results. Bruce’s years of experience in the UK brought an intimate understanding and appreciation for the intricacies of the numerous and changing locations of Europe.

“His taste and subtlety and his awesome team made the challenges of this film not so hard to overcome. Much of Bruce’s best work is invisible because you believe it so completely. The constant transitions between European exteriors and New Zealand interiors are seamlessly handled,” she says.

Costume designer Liz McGregor’s carefully selected wardrobe created the shift from New Zealand - bold, colourful and bright – to darker, melancholic colours as Michael and Sylvie journey through the European winter. To aid the physical degeneration the wardrobe transforms from well-fitting to loose-fitting clothes, signifying the shell of the beautiful boy Michael once was.

Often noted for her own brilliant fashion sense, actress Roxane Mesquida says, “It was easy to be a new person,” in the wardrobe selected for the film which was largely created from vintage pieces sourced from op shops and online. She emailed Liz during the shoot in Europe to say, “I love Sylvie’s style.”

An eggshell blue original 50s dress found online became the central motif for the character. “With that one dress I was able to build the character,” says Liz. “Michael and Sylvie stumble across a vintage store in Paris and see each other reflected in the mirror, essentially for the first time in a truly romantic sense, and it’s such a dreamy sequence, the costumes enhance everything, without overstating it.”

Matt Whelan (Michael) and Roxane Mesquida (Sylvie) on location in a snowy Paris.



Meanwhile make-up designer Deb Watson had a task that was integral to the success and believability of the story – the challenge of creating the slow transition of Michael’s illness using make-up.

Deb says, “I was approached to work on the film and I knew the premise of the story. I had a very close friend die from cancer and I felt, artistically, it was a chance for me to create something real, as opposed to a fantasy make-up. At the forefront of my mind was to make sure the audience are never jarred out of the story. They actually believe Michael is dying and they can see the transition.”

Kirstin says Deb achieved what she hadn’t even thought possible. “Despite the illness we needed Michael to remain beautiful and somehow she did it. The evidence on Michael’s skin of his illness is compelling and sad; he’s believably sick, but he glows right through it with life. He is a young man not owned by his illness.”



Matt Whelan (Michael) on a park bench in snow-covered Munich.

post production

Editor Peter Roberts is described by the director as “pretty wild back in the day” so he had an innate understanding of Michael’s character. Bringing his life experience to his part on the film Peter endeavoured to bring out Michael’s humanity and likability, while keeping him truly wild and unapologetic, both things that were very important to the director. Kirstin noted that Peter’s sensitivity to the performances and nuances was intense, “I could see he loved all the actors and all the characters, warts and all which was a relief.”

Simon Riley, the effects editor and sound designer, and dialogue editor Emile de la Rey worked to create a genuinely stimulating, youthful and enjoyable experience with the soundscapes. Kirstin says, “Simon built gorgeously loud cage-rattling environments and delicate quiet moments throughout the film, while Emile crafted the dialogue and the actors’ breathing to heighten moments, adding hugely to the mood and the audience experience.”

Multi-talented composer Grayson Gilmour has “his fingerprints all over the film,” according to Kirstin. “It’s completely drenched in music from start to finish and I’m not sure how many other 26-year-old musicians could write such a beautiful but completely eclectic soundtrack. Grayson has brought an intelligence and sensitivity to the film music, a clear understanding of the story, and an ability to express that story and the characters musically, in ways that go straight to the heart and soul.”

director's statement

The Most Fun You Can Have Dying is my first feature film. The journey to make it has taken seven long years – I feel like it's the hardest, best thing I've ever done.

I've wanted to be involved in movies since seeing *Labyrinth* at 13. It was the first time I was truly captured by the magic of cinema. I wanted to wear the dress and dance with David Bowie in a crystal ball. And then at film school I fell in love with the films of David Cronenberg and David Lynch and decided to be a director. So for me it's really all because of my obsession with the three Davids.

The Most Fun You Can Have Dying is based on the novel *Seraphim Blues* by Steven Gannaway. As soon as I found Steven's book I had a feeling about it, and half way down the first paragraph I just knew I had to make it into a film. The first words in the novel are: 'This is not an apology.' I couldn't resist the attitude and freshness of it.

The novel is full of energy and the exuberance of being young and not caring what the world thinks of you. I loved that and more than anything I loved the character of Michael who embodied that spirit. I wanted the audience of the film to feel it too.

One of the things I liked most about writing the script was channelling the voice of a young man. I loved putting myself in Michaels' shoes and thinking, 'What would I say? What would I do? How many girls would I try and shag?!' Michael lived so strongly in my imagination by the second draft of the script that I felt like he was a real person. Saying goodbye to him now the film is over has been pretty weird.

One of the strangest aspects of writing an adaptation is taking someone else's characters and making them into your own. But after seven years of writing the script and making the film they do feel like they belong to me as well as Steven. I've put so much of myself into them now that the film feels extremely honest, as though every idea I've ever had about life is up there on screen.

The thing I wanted most was for the audience to care about Michael and his journey – and to get it – to get why he does what he does. All the decisions – casting, locations, costumes, cinematography, script – were about making that happen.



Matt Whelan (Michael) and Roxane Mesquida (Sylvie) at a gig in Paris.

The idea of telling a story that moved from NZ to Hong Kong to Europe was really exciting – not just because of the travelling – but because of the effect on the film visually of the constantly changing locations. This is a film with no concept of ‘home’.

It was incredible to do what was fairly close to a guerrilla shoot through Europe (we had a crew of 12). We could react to opportunities as they came up. It was the coldest winter in 150 years, but I had a vision of the film being filled with sunlight. So whenever we saw the sun we’d get the camera out and shoot it. I felt sorry for our lovely crew. Me and the cinematographer would get a gleam in our eyes and ‘rest time’ would be over for everyone else! But it was worth it; every single shot of the sun we got in Europe is in the final film.

The trip was basically my Overseas Experience, an amazing adventure and a film all rolled into one. The first day on set was in London and the night before I was insanely nervous. I just couldn’t believe it had come to this – that I actually had to direct a feature film in the morning. I lay awake all night in a panic and didn’t relax until we started rolling and from then on I just loved it.

We worked extremely hard and we were totally up against it in every way. With the cold in Europe everyone suffered, particularly the actors. We shot on top of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris in minus 15 degrees with the make-up freezing on the actors’ faces! Every time you look at Matt in Europe and it looks like he’s wearing a T-shirt – know that he probably has five layers of thermals under it and heat packs in his pockets and he’s still freezing.

Matt Whelan is really the only young man in New Zealand who could have played the role of Michael. He is stunningly talented, he’s capable of playing somebody who does thoughtless and selfish things, and yet he’s got vulnerability, heart, and openness. I can’t speak for him – but I think Michael is probably the most challenging role he’s ever had. He’s in every single scene and it’s a hugely demanding role, emotionally, physically and mentally.

I saw Roxane Mesquida for the first time in *À ma sœur!* by Catherine Breillat. She was stunning and brave and I remembered her years later when we were thinking about casting a French actress. Roxane brings something to Sylvie which is perfect; heart and soul, but with a genuine element of mystery. Roxane makes Sylvie into a woman both Michael and the audience fall in love with, but can never possess.

This film is about feeling young and free and bulletproof, about opening up to the world, giving yourself away. I hope people of all ages will recognise something of themselves in the main character of Michael with his longing for life and travel and unforgettable experiences.



Matt Whelan (Michael) lost in space in a scene set in a London nightclub.

about the cast

MATT WHELAN: **MICHAEL**

Matt Whelan is a young kiwi actor on a trajectory for greatness. He finds it playing this role of Michael.

Originally from Christchurch, Matt moved to Wellington to attend Toi Whakari – New Zealand’s internationally recognised national drama school – then headed further north to Auckland for a lead role in TVNZ’s acclaimed series *Go Girls*.

His work in *Go Girls* led directly to him being cast as the romantic male lead in Roseanne Liang’s critically acclaimed feature film *My Wedding and Other Secrets* gaining a nomination in the 2011 AFTA Awards for Best Lead Actor in a feature film.

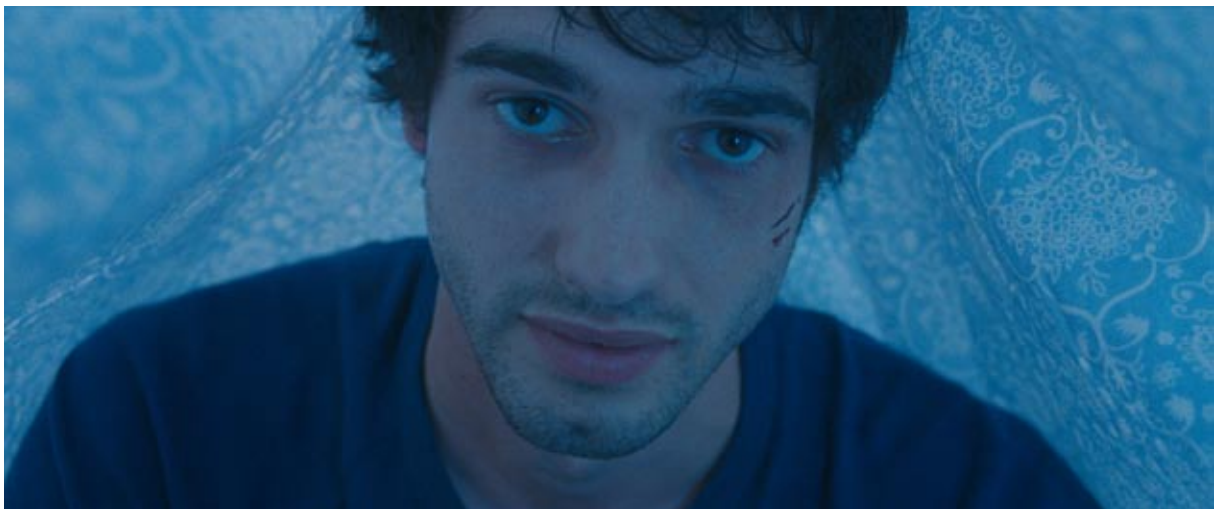
Matt brings to *The Most Fun You Can Have Dying* a powerful intelligence, a physical intensity, and the sort of brooding leading-man looks that casting directors, and audiences, dream of.

Matt Whelan on The Most Fun You Can Have Dying

“When I first read the script I was blown away – it was incredibly riveting and I couldn’t put it down, it was such a beautiful story, beautifully told.

The film is not about a guy dying. It’s about a young man making the most of his time living. Throughout the film he’s ignoring his declining health and doesn’t want a bar of it. He’s running from death but he’s also running from the safety nets people want to wrap him in.

People will be challenged by the film and I hope come away thinking about what they appreciate in life and the people around them.”





ROXANE MESQUIDA: **SYLVIE**

Roxane Mesquida is well known in her native France and to festival audiences for a string of brilliant performances in successful European movies.

Born in Marseille, Rouches-du-Rhone, France, Roxane grew up in Le Pradet. She was discovered at the age of 11 by the director Manuel Pradal who cast her in his film *Marie Baie des Anges* (*Mary from the Bay of Angels*) with Vahina Giocante and Emmanuelle Beart.

This led directly to roles in *L'École de la chair* (1998), and then to series of collaborations with the controversial and acclaimed director Catherine Breillat, who cast her in *À ma sœur!* (*Fat Girl*), *Sex is Comedy* and *Une Vieille Maitresse*, in which she starred alongside Asia Argento.

Roxane's other notable roles include her performances in *Sennentuntschi*, *Rubber*, and *Kaboom* (working with the director Greg Araki). Roxane has recently been shooting TV's *Gossip Girl*, playing Beatrice Grimaldi, Prince Louis Grimaldi's beautiful sister.

Apart from her extraordinary and ethereal beauty, Roxane brings a smouldering intelligence to *The Most Fun You Can Have Dying* and great acting craft. She submerges herself in the difficult and many-layered role of Sylvie turning out an unforgettable performance.

Roxane Mesquida on The Most Fun You Can Have Dying

"I wanted to be involved because this was one of the best scripts I have ever read and I had seen [director] Kirstin's short films. I love her style. Even though it is a movie of someone dying and should be sad, it is very alive. We are always laughing and screaming and doing crazy things.

Sylvie is a sincere and complex character and truly the most amazing one I have done since playing Fat Girl ten years ago. She has her own problems and has had a hazy and complicated past. She does things because she is really sensitive and she is trying to protect herself.

It was easy to get into the character and so easy to work with Kirstin. Everything felt so natural and I didn't feel lost. I just feel like she (the director) loves us so she doesn't force anything. This makes you want to give her everything you can which makes me love my job even more."

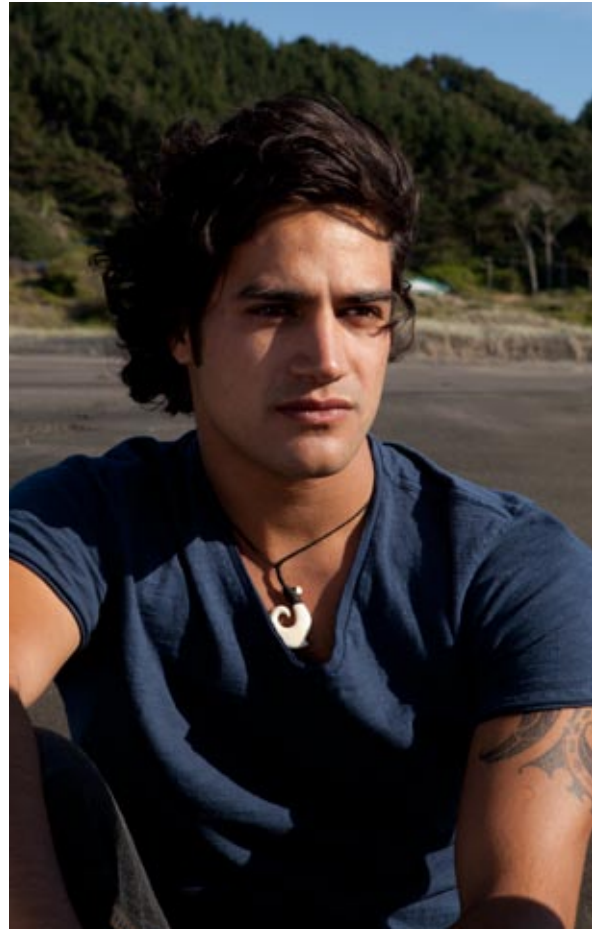
PANA HEMA-TAYLOR: **DAVID**

Pana Hema-Taylor has a story behind him that one day should be the basis of its own feature film.

The former bad boy and gang prospect from Wairoa was literally saved by his own talent and passion for acting. One of eight children he was sent by his family to live with his father in Christchurch where he attended Aranui High School and displayed outstanding acting talent.

He quickly secured a key role in Taika Waititi's *BOY* as a member of the Crazy Horses Gang, a role in the made for TV movie *Nights in The Garden of Spain*, and a long running role in TV's *Spartacus*.

Pana is one of the most exciting and watchable young actors working in New Zealand today.



Pana Hema-Taylor on The Most Fun You Can Have Dying

"When I first read the script I was touched by it personally and to be honest it made me cry tears. I was keen to play my character David because he's a nice guy. I've done a lot of bad dudes. I love David as a character as he's so soft and so responsible.

It's a universal story and people will relate to my role of caring unconditionally for someone who is ill.

Also traveling to Monaco, Berlin and Munich – it was like something out of a movie. To travel overseas was quite big for me."



Clementine Howe (Lizzie) and Matt Whelan (Michael) in the backyard of Michael and David's flat.

CLEMENTINE HOWE: **LIZZIE**

Introducing 15-year-old Clementine Howe who plays Lizzie, the younger sister of David in the film. Lizzie is a key role as Michael sees her as his surrogate younger sister too. He also has little idea she has a blinding crush on him.

Clementine's mother signed her daughter to an acting agency aged seven. As Clementine says, "I've always had that 'drama queen attitude' to me."

"My family is really happy I got this role, but they don't want me to turn into a diva, they want me to stay true to myself."

COLIN MOY: **JOHN**

Actor Colin Moy plays Michael's father John in the film. Born in 1969 he is a familiar and respected face having worked in theatre, television and film in New Zealand since 1995.

He was born in Auckland, spending one year at Auckland University before moving to Sydney, studying for three years at the Sydney Acting School. His television credits include *Hercules*, *Xena Warrior Princess*, *Shortland Street* and *Mataku*. His film credits include *Memory and Desire*, *I'll Make You Happy*, *The Vertical Limit* and *In My Father's Den* for which he was awarded Best Supporting Actor at the New Zealand Screen Awards.

Over the past decade Colin has developed his writing and directing experience and been actively involved in encouraging new New Zealand plays and playwrights through his work at the Auckland Theatre Company.

SOPHIE HENDERSON: **TINA**

Sophie Henderson is familiar to New Zealand audiences playing the bombshell Bailey Wilson in TV3's outrageously successful *Outrageous Fortune*, as well as several other notable TV productions, including *The Cult*, *This Is Not My Life*, *Legend of the Seeker*, *The Jacquie Brown Diaries* and *Underbelly: Land of the Long Green Cloud*.

A UNITEC Bachelor of Performing and Screen Arts graduate Sophie appeared in the feature film *Rowboat*. She also has theatre production credits to her name having both written and acted in the theatre production *I Heart Camping*.

To the pivotal role of David's girlfriend Tina, Sophie brings a luminous and quiet intensity that makes her scenes unforgettable.



Caren Pistorius (Chloe) and Matt Whelan (Michael) in the backyard of Michael and David's flat.

CAREN PISTORIUS: **CHLOE**

Auckland actor Caren Pistorius came to the screen with a huge reputation carved out of the Auckland theatre scene.

Caren was born in South Africa, moving to New Zealand when she was 12. She graduated from Howick College in 2002 as top dramatic performer of the year and credits her arrival in New Zealand with opening her career prospects to acting.

She studied graphic design at the Auckland University of Technology before realising acting is her true calling.

Quickly establishing herself via a role in the ABC Studios action-adventure television series *Legend of The Seeker*, based on *The Sword of Truth* novels by Terry Goodkind, this is Caren's debut feature film role. She plays Chloe, Michael's girlfriend.

the filmmakers

WRITER/DIRECTOR: **KIRSTIN MARCON**

After growing up in rural New Zealand it seems this debut feature film director has been on a trajectory to reach this point in her career for many years.

Kirstin is an energetic and charismatic director, who firmly believes the more lightning you can trap in the bottle, the better. She is a talented writer with a deeply subversive voice, drawn to create moments of sweet romance meshed with turmoil. Her idea of a good story is bold, primal and most of all entertaining. She has fought hard to keep this film an unapologetically biased story about an anti-hero; a fully rounded experience that takes him and the audience to the brink of his journey.

Kirstin attended film school in the Waikato. Following film school she branched out into student radio and music magazines, eventually becoming a graphic designer. She returned to study at the Elam School of Fine Arts in her early twenties, and after the birth of her son worked in advertising.

Over the years she has kept her passion for making films, whether it be art school projects, 48Hour film competition entries, Film Commission shorts, or making Lego animations with her son.

Her 35mm short film *She's Racing* was in Competition at Edinburgh, Torino, and Chicago where it won a Silver Plaque, and was selected for the honour of being screened at the Telluride Festival before Australian indie hit *Chopper*. Her next short *Picnic Stops* went to Hof, Germany; Expression en Corto, Mexico; and the 27th International Women's Film Festival of Créteil, France.

She was a selected participant of the Berlin Talent Campus, studied the Meisner technique of acting, and is a committed daydreamer.



Director Kirstin Marcon on set the day the crew shot her favourite scene: smashing the telly.

PRODUCER: **ALEX COLE-BAKER**

Alex Cole-Baker steps into her role of debut producer of a feature film following over 20 years in the industry.

Initially working as production manager on commercials, documentaries and television magazine series, in 1998 she was thrown in the deep end as a first time production accountant on *Scarfies*, when a friend asked for help. Since then she has worked as production accountant on many New Zealand features including *In My Father's Den* and *The Tattooist*, as well as other international festival successes such as *Out of the Blue* and *Number Two*. It was during this time working with prominent producers she was able to gain the experience, support and encouragement to make her mark on her own.

With the production of several short films under her belt, including *La Vie en Rose* by Anna Reeves, which won a Gold Plaque (Chicago) as well as several New Zealand awards, plus the no-budget featurette *Long Hot Summer* (the debut film of Martin Freeman (*The Office*, *The Hobbit*), made whilst living in London on her OE), Alex now has several film and television projects in development under her own company Chocolate Fish Pictures. In 2007 she was selected to attend the Rotterdam Producers Lab.



Producer Alex Cole-Baker on location in Venice.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: **TIMOTHY WHITE**

Timothy White is one of Australasia's most experienced producers. His long list of producer credits include *Death in Brunswick* starring Sam Neill; Vincent Ward's *Map of the Human Heart* and Gillian Armstrong's *Oscar & Lucinda*.

Over the past decade Timothy has been Chief Executive of Fox Icon and Working Title Australia, a production and development company linked to UK's Working Title Films. He now manages his own production company, Southern Light Films based in Sydney, Australia.

In 2005 he produced *Number Two* with NZ director Toa Fraser which won the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival. He also produced *Out of the Blue* directed by Robert Sarkies, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2006. More recently he has completed *The Boys Are Back* (starring Clive Owen), *Sleeping Beauty* (in Competition at Cannes 2011) and *Two Little Boys* (starring Bret McKenzie and Hamish Blake). He also executive produced *Mister Pip*, directed by Andrew Adamson and starring Hugh Laurie.



Shooting at dawn in Venice.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: **CRIGHTON BONE**

Cinematographer Crighton Bone first studied a Bachelor of Commerce degree at Canterbury University. After completing his degree he returned to study completing a Film and Television Diploma. He now boasts an impressive list of achievements in the commercial, feature film and short film realm.

He spent ten years in London working in television documentary fashion photography, then television commercials, pop promos (for the likes of *Bassment Jaxx*, *Cinematic Orchestra*), documentaries and feature films. He returned to New Zealand in 2007 where his career continues.

He was the 2006 Co-Winner of the Jury Prize for Best Photography at the San Sebastian International Film Festival for the Iranian feature film *Half Moon* directed by Bahman Gobadi and distributed by Match Factory, Germany.

This will be Crighton's 4th feature as Cinematographer, and marks his first in New Zealand since his return from the UK.

Director Kirstin Marcon says, "I was incredibly lucky to work with Crighton who is so talented and did a stunning job. He was great at shooting with a small crew and a stripped down philosophy. And when we were shooting during the 15 minutes of golden light at dawn and dusk he was a magician."

Crighton Bone on The Most Fun You Can Have Dying

"It's a great story full of adventure and rollicking well-spent, rather than misspent youth. We wanted to give the film a very realistic and vital style so we shot it all hand held and gave it a naturalistic lighting style as well.

The aim was to give the film as much realism and authenticity as possible. The film deals with serious and weighty matter, even though Michael is having the most fun he can.

The film is one big swan-song-road-trip – Michael is on a mad rush around Europe and he's desperate to see as much as he can while he has the chance. It makes you consider where you're at in your own life and what you would do if you were in that position."



Director of Photography Crighton Bone, and Focus Puller Jason White shoot Matt Whelan in a water taxi on the Rialto in Venice.



Matt Whelan (Michael) and Pana Hema-Taylor (David) in a scene set in Munich.

COMPOSER: **GRAYSON GILMOUR**

"Who else writes tunes as achingly beautiful as these? Not many people around here, that's for sure!" – Nick Bollinger, RNZ National, The Listener

Hailing from Palmerston North, 26 year old Grayson Gilmour began making solo recordings aged 16. His first album received such a positive response he was convinced to record a second and things have snowballed from there. For many, Grayson is better known as one quarter of New Zealand band *So So Modern*, and he has spent the last years shifting between playing and recording with the band, and his own 'bedroom/studio recluse' projects. After moving to Wellington, he recorded *Behind Locked Doors* (2003/4) following some time spent playing lobby piano in Japanese hotels, with solo albums *Phantom Limbs* (2005) and *You Sleep, We Creep* (2006) coming out in quick succession, alongside the *So So Modern* international touring schedule.

Despite this nomadic lifestyle, Grayson managed to write and record the stripped back *Chapters* EP in 2008, compose his first handful of short film scores, receiving the APRA Professional Development Award in 2009. 2010 saw the release of his fifth album *No Constellation* through Flying Nun Records.

The Most Fun You Can Have Dying is his first feature length film score and an incredible challenge.

Grayson Gilmour on *The Most Fun You Can Have Dying*

"I saw this feature film score debut as a unique opportunity as it made use of the skills I have being in bands as well as a solo musician and composer. I found I was writing stuff I hadn't written before only because I hadn't sat down and thought, 'today I'm going to make a club-ready electronic track that's going to be huge sounding', and it was actually quite enjoyable, if not a little self-indulgent. I also got to experiment in a way with sound I haven't before. Part of the process was breaking everything down, not into location or country parts from the travel perspective but more from the characters and their relationships and interactions."

about the novel

NOVELIST: **STEVEN GANNAWAY**

Seraphim Blues, the novel the film is based on, was published in 2003 by Reed Publishing (now part of the Penguin Group).

Steven was born in England but raised in Te Kuiti, New Zealand. He studied Philosophy and Psychology at Massey University, Palmerston North.

He is an exhibiting artist and recently completed a Bachelor of Fine Art.

As well as writing and painting, Steven has been Executive Director of the New Zealand Writers Guild for the last four years.

He has a cameo role in *The Most Fun You Can Have Dying* as a bartender in the Yellow Submarine Hamilton pub, something he felt very at home with.

Steven Gannaway on *The Most Fun You Can Have Dying*

"It was a well reviewed novel but by far the best review was Kirstin and Alex deciding they wanted to make it into a film. I had actually always hoped it was going to be picked up as it was a theatrical story in my head. It has truths that translate. I was working in a record store when I wrote the novel and thoughts of escape involving large sums of money were always at the front of mind, as with anyone working in retail."

"There was an article on the news about a kid who had leukemia and his small town had raised all this money for the operation and I jokingly thought at the time that if the kid had found out how much money it was, he would probably want to spend it on Lego. Then I thought about what I'd want to spend it on and that was the genesis."

opening credits

a **Chocolate Fish Pictures** production
in association with the **New Zealand Film Commission**
Southern Light Films & Heimatfilm
based on the novel **Seraphim Blues** by **Steven Gannaway**
Matt Whelan
Roxane Mesquida
Pana Hema-Taylor
Casting Directors **Mike Dwyer & Matt Dwyer**
Costume Designer **Liz McGregor**
Make-up Designer **Deb Watson**
Line Producer **Kristian Eek**
Composer **Grayson Gilmour**
Editor **Peter Roberts**
Production Designer **Bruce Everard**
Director of Photography **Crighton Bone**
Executive Producer **Timothy White**
Producer **Alex Cole-Baker**
Written & Directed by **Kirstin Marcon**

end credits

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Michael **MATT WHELAN**
David **PANA HEMA-TAYLOR**
Dr Lake **MATTHEW SAVILLE**
Woman on Street **MANDY MCNEILL**
Tina **SOPHIE HENDERSON**
Band at Yellow Submarine **WILBERFORCES**
Chloe **CAREN PISTORIUS**
Michael's Mum **HANNAH WOODS**
Young Michael **HARRY STANBRIDGE**
Lizzie **CLEMENTINE HOWE**
John **COLIN MOY**
Sick Man **JON CUMMINGS**
DJ at Yellow Submarine **EMILY JANJIRA CAMPBELL**
Bartender **STEVEN GANNAWAY**
Aunty Myra **MAGGIE TARVER**

Jeff PAUL MACDIARMID
Customs Officer HELENE WONG
Assistant Customs Officer DARRYL SANG
Ice-Cream Boys SI KIT WAH
LAM YAT KA
CHAN KA SHING
AU CHIN KIT
Li Li YAO DONG
Tattooist GARY YOUNG
Kissing Couple ANTOINE SANGE
KATHLEEN RIDDELL
Doorman RAPHAEL WALSH
'David' DANIEL CASTELLA DELGADO
Jamie FLORENCE NOBLE
Spazza DALE SLADE
Andrew CHRIS TEMPEST
Sylvie ROXANE MESQUIDA
Parisian Waitress CELINE SAYE
Woman at Père Lachaise STÉPHANIE DANIEL

Band in Paris THE NAKED AND FAMOUS
Busker VIRGILE ELANA
Tall Dark Stranger GIJSBERT DE RONDE
Angel of Death GREGORY KING
Boy in Hospital LOUREN RYAN
Man in Hospital TYL RANDOW
Police Officer PHILIPP SPAHN
Doctor CHRISTINE BECKER
Receptionist TAJA NIELSON
Blonde MEGAN PADDISON
Brunette HANNAH TASKER-POLAND
Croupier NATALIA GORELOVA
Monaco Waiter PASCAL MURELLO
Maid ELENA BOLLINO
Grandmother SILVIA HNATYSZYN
Young Girl ELIZABETH SMAU
Walking Men FRANCESCO CAISELLI
INNOCENZO LA CARPIA
Venetian Waiter THOMAS SELMIN

Made with the assistance of Digifilm and Charlotte Larsen

CREW

New Zealand Unit

First Assistant Director ROBYN GRACE
Second Assistant Directors
BRUNO DU BOIS
SARAH ROSE
Third Assistant Director
REREMOANA MCLEOD
Additional ADs KATE HARGREAVES
RICHARD KNOWLES
ANT DAVIES
Script Supervisor ARIA HARRISON
Additional Continuity KATHARINE PHYN
Focus Puller JASON WHITE
Clapper Loader ABBY MOUNTER
Video Split Operator JACOB SLOVAK
Additional Clapper Loader
ALEXANDER GLUCINA
Production Coordinator
DONNA PEARMAN
Assistant Production Coordinator
QUENTIN FULLERTON-SMITH

Production Accountant ALAN BRASH
Extras Coordinator REUBEN VAN DORSTEN
Additional Extras Casting
YVONNE BENNETT
Production Runner DOMINIC MILES
Travel Coordinators ARJEN STIENSTRA
ALEXANDER CAMPBELL
Additional Runners TIMOTHY BURNELL
ANDY BROWN
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ROYCE DAWSON
Interns FINN SCOTT-KELLY
MARY-ANN TUAO
Chaperones BETHWYN LITTLER
ARIANNE ZILBERG
Dialect Coach XIAO QIAN LI
Medical Advisor SALLY GEARY
Croupier Trainer and Advisor
QUENTIN HOETE
Standby Props ANTONY CATTERMOUL

Props Master PENNY KERR
Set Decorator MEGAN VERTELLE
Set Dresser SINCLAIR LONSDALE
Graphic Designer DANNY FELTHAM
Armourer GUNNER ASHFORD
Art Department Runner RUA SMITH
Gaffer / Grip GILES COBURN
Best Boy SAM JELLIE
Lighting / Grip Assistant
MARK WIGGLESWORTH
Lighting Trainee BEN MONTGOMERY
Additional Grips EVAN PARDINGTON
PABLO STEVENSON
MICKAELE EVANS
AJ SOUTH
Low Loader Grip JOHNNY WHEELER
Lighting Desk Operator DAVID FISHER
Additional Lighting Assistants NICK RIINI
STEPHEN JOYCE
JOHN BELL
JAMES BEATTIE
CHRISTIAN DUNN
TERETIANO RETI
SAM CLARK
Lighting Trainees MATT WHILSHERE
THOMAS NEUNZERLING
Location Manager SEÁN TRACEY-BROWN
Locations Assistant CRAIG TIKAO
Location Scout JEREMY GALVIN
Additional Location Assistants CORRINE ASH
WILLEM CROWHURST
JESSE HILFORD
LEIGH ELFORD
ROMAIN MEREAU
BRITTA LAURITZEN
Waikato Location Assistants
RENEE CASSERLY
WILLOW TOTTERDELL

Unit Manager MARK HENDRY
Costume Buyer / Standby
HANNAH WOODS
Costume Assistant PETRA VERWEIJ
Additional Costume Assistant
WENDY COOK
Make Up and Hair Artist DAVINA LAMONT
Additional Make Up Assistants
VERNETTA GULLIVER
LINDA HAL COUPER
CLAIRE WOLLBURG
Sound Recordist FRED ENHOLMER
Additional Sound Recordist ADAM MARTIN
Boom Operator EOIN COX
Additional Boom Operator GERRY PARKE
Transport Captain CHRISTOPHER HEAD
Swing Driver MOSES SAMSON
Unit Publicist ANNA DEAN
Stills Photographer CRAIG WRIGHT
Additional Stills (Europe)
GEORG NONNENMACHER
BENJAMIN RICKER
LAURENT CLAUWAERT
ULRIKE SCHRABERGER
JENS WINTER
EPK Camera and Lighting CRAIG WRIGHT
EPK Editor PETER ROBERTS
Catering LUSCIOUS CATERING
JONO CLARKE
WAGNER EDUARDO
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Safety Officers ROB FULLARTON
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Producer MATTHIAS KRAUSE
Line Producer SASCHA VERHEY

Finance Controller
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Accounting SARAH BEYER
Production Manager
LUCAS MEYER-HENTSCHEL

1st Assistant Directors TIMOTHY WHITE
DEB WATSON
2nd Assistant Director ELLEN WÖLK
Focus Puller JASON WHITE
Clapper Loader MIRIAM FASSBENDER
Gaffer / Grip GEORG NONNENMACHER
Standby Wardrobe HANNAH WOODS
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Equipment Driver FRANZ RUNGE
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ROBERT NIEMETZ
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London

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Location Manger JOHNNY LUDLOW
Assistant Location Manager
DANIEL CASTELLA DELGADO
Production Coordinator PATRICIA DELGADO
Driver / Security
MARK ANTHONY HATCHWELL
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MJW PRODUCTIONS LTD

Paris

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Location Manager SAMIR BENJELOUN
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LAURENT CLAUWAERT
YANNICK CHAMBARD
Additional Electrician GEORGE BOZKURT
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Monreal and Mayen

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Runner CHRISTINA HAFERKAMP
Vehicle Wrangler ULRICH KARIS
Low Loader Grip
CINE OF WHEELS – GERHARD WILLIÉ

Berlin

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Extras Casting
ARBEITSAGENTUR – VERA WENDLAND

Munich

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Production Assistant SOPHIE MAUGER
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PRODUCTIONS S.A.R.L.

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Location Manager SIMONETTA DI FRESCO
Set Runner CAMILLA VIOLO
Crowd Marshall DANIELA FOÁ
Accountant CHIARA MAZZAVILLANI
Production Services provided by
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SEBASTIAN GASSNER
JONAS KÜPPER
Editing / Compositing MARCEL VOß
JANA HEYN
Telecine ROSALIE JUNG

Hong Kong Unit

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WILLIAM CHENG
Preproduction Services JOHNNY WANG
CONNIE CHEUNG
Insurance
TUI INSURANCE CONSULTANTS LTD
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Focus Puller JASON WHITE
Camera Assistant KENNIX KIE

Clapper Loader RAYMOND WONG
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Sound Recorder ANGUS MAK
Unit Manager LUK KAM KU
Production Assistants OSCAR CHENG
YEWMAN SIN
Extras Casting SCORPIO PRODUCTIONS
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Laboratory CINE ART LABORATORY LTD

POST PRODUCTION

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Supervising Dialogue Editor
EMILE DE LA REY
Supervising Effects Editor SIMON RILEY
Re-recording Mixer
BRUNO BARRETT-GARNIER
ADR and Re-record at
DIGIPOST, AUCKLAND
ADR Recordist MICHELLE MASCOLL
ADR Facility LA BUZZY'S RECORDING
Foley recorded at UNDERGROUND
SOUND, WELLINGTON
Foley Artist ROSEMARY CULLEN
Foley Engineer DARREN MAYNARD
Additional Foley recorded at
DIGIPOST, AUCKLAND
Foley Artist BEN STOCKWELL
Foley Engineer JONATHAN BRUCE
Dolby Sound Consultant BRUCE EMERY
Digital Effects by DIGIPOST, AUCKLAND
Visual Effects Artists RICHARD BETTS
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DANIEL ASHTON

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Sound Negative and Release Prints by PARK
ROAD POST PRODUCTION, WELLINGTON
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Film Prints Released on KODAK
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Script Consultants MATTHEW SAVILLE
CLAIRE DOBBIN
LOUISE GOUGH
Post Production Accountants
NAOMI BOWDEN
BECKY HUTTON

Export Script FIONA BARTLETT
Music Recorded and Mixed by
MUNKI – MIKE GIBSON
Additional Recording at AUSTIN TOWERS
Additional Musicians
DANIEL NAGELS – DRUMS
CHRIS FAWDRAY – DRUMS
CHARLES DAVENPORT – CELLO
Music Supervision
AEROPLANE MUSIC SERVICES LIMITED

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Soundtrack on FLYING NUN RECORDS

**"ANEUTHER DAY", "DOLEDAYS"
& "NO MORE BETS"**

Written by Grayson Gilmour
Performed by Grayson Gilmour
and Daniel Nagels

**"LETTERS TO BEETHOVEN" (MFD Version)
& "PREPARATIONS"**

Written by Grayson Gilmour
Performed by Grayson Gilmour
and Charles Davenport

"AETHRSZ" & "WILBERNOISES"

Written and performed by Grayson Gilmour

"YOUNG BLOOD"

Written by Thomas Powers, Alisa Xayalith
and Aaron Short (control)
Performed by The Naked and Famous
Courtesy of Somewhat Damaged

**"YOUTH", "PARISIAN FLIMG",
"HOLLOW YET HEAVY"
& "HOOKER & COKE"**

Written by Grayson Gilmour
Performed by Grayson Gilmour
and Chris Fawdray

"TIDAL WAVES"

Written by Thomas Burton, Emily Littler
and Christopher Varnham
Performed by Wilberforces

"NICE DAY FOR AN EARTHQUAKE"

Written by Jeff Boyle, Maurice Beckett
and Jason Johnston
Performed by Jakob

"HUMBLE PUNK ROCK"

Written by Grayson Gilmour
Performed by Grayson Gilmour,
Chris Fawdray and Charles Davenport

Presented at IFP No Borders International Co-production Market and SPAAmart
Developed with additional assistance from Script to Screen and The Hive



Filmed on location in Auckland, Hamilton, Cambridge and Raglan, New Zealand;
London, Paris, Monreal, Mayen, Berlin, Munich, Nice, Monaco, Milan, Venice
and Hong Kong

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