



*Screen Australia Presents, in association with Create NSW, Spectrum Films, Lemac, Caravan Pictures  
A Night Kitchen Production*

## **HEARTS AND BONES**

**Written and Directed by Ben Lawrence**

Co-Written by Beatrix Christian

Starring Hugo Weaving, Hayley McElhinney, Bolude Watson

And Introducing Andrew Luri



[Additional Stills Here](#)

### **TIFF Screenings**

**Public Screening #1:** Saturday, September 7th at 4:45 PM (Scotiabank)

**Press & Industry Screening:** Sunday, September 8th at 12:15 PM (Scotiabank)

**Public Screening #2:** Monday, September 9th at 12:00 PM (Scotiabank)

**Public Screening #3:** Friday, September 13th at 6:15 PM (Scotiabank)

**Press Contact:** Brigade Marketing

Guillermo Restrepo - [Guillermo@BrigadeMarketing.com](mailto:Guillermo@BrigadeMarketing.com)

**Sales Contact:** Visit Films

Ryan Kampe - [info@visitfilms.com](mailto:info@visitfilms.com)

### **LOGLINE**

Dan, a renowned war photographer struggling with PTSD, forms an unexpected bond with Sebastian, a Sudanese refugee, until one of his photographs unearths a dark secret from Sebastian's past.

### **SYNOPSIS**

War photographer Daniel Fisher (Hugo Weaving) has returned home to the news of his wife's pregnancy. Determined not to let fatherhood alter his way of life, he begins preparations for an upcoming exhibition and his next overseas assignment. However, as the birth of his child draws near he struggles to keep his rising anxiety hidden.

Meanwhile, South Sudanese refugee Sebastian Aman (Andrew Luri) has created a safe life in Australia with his wife and child. His peaceful life is disturbed when Daniel's exhibition threatens to display photographs of a massacre that occurred in Sebastian's home village 15 years earlier. When Sebastian approaches Daniel with an appeal to not display any images of the massacre, an unlikely friendship develops between the two men that challenges Daniel's creative control and unearths disturbing details surrounding Sebastian's past.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

### About The Story

#### **Ben Lawrence:**

I began looking at specific war photographs, famous ones and not so famous ones, and I came across one that I saw in a Sydney exhibition. It's a close up of a man who had a gun held to his head. All the information was in there. This extreme expression of fear. And it posed a lot of questions for me, Who was that man that had the gun to his head? Who was the guy holding the gun? And who were the other figures that you could see on the edge of frame around him? And then, who was the photographer? And how close was he to it? How much was he in danger? So it was from that story and that photograph and those inspirations that I began to write the story of *Hearts and Bones*.

Another experience that happened during that period was a television campaign I did for Amnesty International, which exposed me to a lot of local stories about refugees who had recently arrived in Australia. Many at that time were from the Middle East, some were from Bosnia. And it was the Bosnian group of women that I met who had formed a choir and they were the inspiration for the choir that's in the film.

In writing the film, it was really important for all of us to engage, particularly the producer and I, to engage with the South Sudanese community, because we weren't from that community, we didn't have any connections to that community. And so we wanted the script to be shared with a number of people who could give us feedback on a cultural sensitivities and authenticity about the story, the details and then also how much of the film and the story is going to resonate in a true sense with people who have had this lived experience.

We reached out to a number of people to further that understanding. One of them was Deng Adut, who is a local lawyer, a South Sudanese man who was a child soldier and had written the book *Songs Of A War Boy*. That was my introduction to him, his book. But he agreed to read the script and also give us feedback on the story.

And it was in that meeting with him that, like a really good lawyer, he went through the script with a fine tooth comb, marked things and really gave us in-depth feedback about a whole range of aspects within the film, but particularly about the south Sudanese character. By meeting with him I really was able to grapple with the gravity of the story. We were trying to tell the complex trauma that so many of these men and women and children go through who have had this experience of being a refugee.

Deng talked about a particular moment in the film that triggered him emotionally because it pinpointed something in his life that he'd experienced. It was the scene where Sebastian talks about his memory of having seen his family being massacred. Deng just really reminded me how important it is to get this right and how complex the stories are and that while we're telling the story of one person, it represents a whole range of people's stories, of not just South Sudanese, but people who are having to flee their countries.

#### **Hugo Weaving:**

I actually read a version of the script many years ago. I liked it. I just liked the setup of it, but I didn't think it was quite there. Then when I read it again last year, I really loved it. All of the things that I liked

about it initially were even more complex and more layered. The journey and the structure of the characters was more conflicted and complex.

All four characters have secrets. All of the four main characters have secrets. Internal dramas that mostly come out are dealt with but all of them are reluctant to reveal what that particular conflict is. A lot of the drama is internal drama and these four people trying to deal with those internal dramas in a very constructive familiar way.

I think the script is hugely intelligent and has just grown in layers over the years. It's informed by Ben's own experience by the film industry and traveling around the world and taking photographs himself. He's a wonderful photographer. He's got a great eye and the thing I love about working with him most is, because he has a documentary background, the way in which he's working with Andrew (Luri, who plays Sebastian). He knows Andrew is the man. He's not a trained actor. I'm interested in the man. I'm interested in the real person. All of those things that Andrew has, all of the experience that Andrew has, if that can feed into Sebastian then that is something you can't train for. He's got it. Because all of the things will be in Andrews face, he's not speaking, are the things to me that speak volumes of character and trauma and experience. Those are the things I look for when I'm watching a film. Those minute details of character. Those minute psychological traces that you can see in someone's face, that you will see in a documentary.

**Andrew Luri:**

It's about family life, it's about a community life, it's about bringing communities together. It's about letting people understand the problems that others are facing. Sometimes by telling a story, just by words, is not enough, but by action is everything because people understand things in different ways. I'm sure the Australian public does not understand all the problems that some people have so it will give them a chance to learn about and understand all these stories. And this is just a portion of it. There are some stories which are not told about, and people don't know, so if this is a window, or a vision to let other people understand or know. This would make this country even greater.

There's no better time. There's no better time than this one to tell a story. This is the best time because the director chose the time and he has the power to change things, and since he's available and he's willing to make it happen. We are very pleased. I'm actually very, very pleased having him around to make this happen. I'm very, very excited about it.

**Hayley McElhinney:**

I feel like it's about past, your past and what you bring to the community. So, everyone's got a story to tell and it's how we interact with each other, having that history. It's how we enrich each other with our past no matter what it is and forgiving the past. It's a film about family and community and your story and how we all can come together and make something together. I think it's good to see people on the screen that don't look like me, so it's been so wonderful to see so many different faces on this film set from all different parts of the world.

What's also been incredible is to be around real refugees. What heroes they are. They've come from hardship and they've come to this country and some of them haven't even been able to speak English when they arrive. And I have been lucky enough to have been rubbing shoulders with those people on this film set and it has just been one of the best experiences of my life. I think it's really great for it to be on the screen, for people to see these people, if they're not lucky enough like I am to work with them. To see their stories on the big screen, I think it can only make for a better planet.

I love how in this film everyone's just trying to be the best parent or just trying to be the best partner within their circumstances. I loved when I read it that you see Anishka and Sebastian and they're doing two jobs. They're working these really long hours and they are still trying to be great parents and good partners and how that's a struggle. I love that. I like seeing that in film because that's real. That happens. And then with Josie and Dan you've got ... You see their lifestyle, which of course is completely different but they're still trying to be good partners. They're still trying to deal with their past and their grief so it's kind of great seeing people trying to do their best.

**Bolude Watson:**

One minute I was laughing and the next minute I was breaking down. It broke my heart. There are parts of it that broke my heart and I feel like the heartbreak is beautiful, too, and I think it's because the authentic voice of the script. It doesn't lie. It doesn't try and be what it's not. Again, that's so rare. It's rare for a script to do this so wonderfully and Ben's script does that so beautifully.

But don't get me wrong, it's not a movie about black people. It's not a movie about Africans. It's not a movie about a South Sudanese person. It's a movie about humans. It's a movie about humanity. It's a movie about heartache and loss and life. It's a movie about tragedy. It's also a movie about regrowth and rebuilding. At its core, and I think that's the final message we rebuild. After a tragic situation, you rebuild. You don't give up. You create something new and you acknowledge your past. I think that's one of the lessons.

**What Drew You to the Project**

**Hugo Weaving:**

What drew me to it was the script, really. The script and then meeting Ben. I talked to Ben and really liked him a lot. I saw his film Ghosthunter, which was fascinating too because I realized a lot of those things that Ben had been unearthing in that world were feeding into this script. I was sort of already on board by then, but to me these sort of parallel works dealing primarily with male trauma was interesting to explore.

**Hayley McElhinney**

When I read Hearts and Bones for the first time, I was struck with goose pimples all through the experience of reading it and I thought, 'Wow. That doesn't happen often.' And the character Josie was so unpredictable, like it wasn't the girlfriend role which I'm kind of used to reading, to be quite honest. It was really refreshing to read a part that was complex and real, and I instantly wanted to be a part of it. I've been lucky to work with Hugo before so when I found out that he was in the film I really wanted to work with him again because he's incredibly generous, creative person and I just thoroughly enjoyed working with him when we were working in theatre. And when I walked into the room and Hugo was there it was like we just picked up where we left off so there's a familiarity with him. I felt comfortable with him and there's a real trust and playfulness there, so I think hopefully in the film you'll see that we've got a history and we really work well together.

**On Working with Hugo Weaving**

**Ben Lawrence:**

The first time we met we just talked for hours. And he doesn't know, but that day I was meant to fly out of Sydney and I missed my flight because we were just chatting for so long about the film and about the

films we loved, about the stories we want to tell. We really connected on the idea that we wanted to make films in Sydney about Sydney or set in Sydney. And that was something I had mentioned in the letter. We talked about the documentary I'd made and what that process was like and how that may inform the filming of Hearts and Bones. And he was interested in all of that. And the films that he liked really resonated with me. So we kind of formed a ... I wouldn't call it a pact, but an idea that we were meeting on these common grounds, these common points on that very first day.

And I felt really supported by that. Him just doing the project validated it, that the story was good and all of that. And in a strange way it gave me a huge boost of confidence that I was able to work with someone like that and that he responded to the story we're going to tell and that he was so giving and supportive of all the other actors there, who all looked up to him and you know, it was really special to have him there.

He knew potentially that he would be playing alongside someone who had never done a film and that they had an equal amount of dialogue and a very heavy transition of an emotional journey for a non-actor. And in a way, Hugo would be tasked ... would be supporting that person on screen.

But what really interested and fascinated me was what became this real back and forth between the two men (Hugo and Andrew) off camera but also on camera. And what Andrew, who played Sebastian was giving off camera and on camera. Hugo was responding to and supporting that. And so Hugo, for me, was kind of the center of the storm for the film in that he was a solid anchor for all of us. For him to say, no this is right. It might seem chaotic, it might seem like we're trying to find something, but this is how it's done and this is how we find great things.

### **On Working with Director Ben Lawrence**

#### **Hugo Weaving:**

Working with Ben has been wonderful. It's his script and I love that. I love working with the director who's actually written the script because you can always talk to the source. You're not wondering about where this has come from. Or you might be and in fact, writer/directors don't always know what something means, or they might not have actually put two and two together, so an actor can sometimes unearth something that's not necessarily clear. Then you have to talk about it together and say, 'Well I think this is what it is.'

Ben's very even tempered. Very calm, relaxed. So, the set has been immensely calm. Moving forward in a way that feels effortless. He's incredibly well prepared and yet he's flexible and able to let things go if they're not vitally important. Not worry about things other people might think are important but they're not part of the way in which he sees a scene or a piece.

All of those things that Andrew has, all of the experience that Andrew has, if that can feed into Sebastian then that is something you can't train for. He's got it. Because all of the things will be in Andrews face, he's not speaking, are the things to me that speak volumes of character and trauma and experience. Those are the things I look for when I'm watching a film. Those minute details of character. Those minute psychological traces that you can see in someone's face, that you will see in a documentary. But you rarely see in a feature film. It's why I'm really fascinated to work with Ben because I think that side of his craft and that side of his sensibility will be augmented in this film.

It's been a great journey for me. I did say it in day one, 'I'm going to learn more from you' and I mean

that. I think I have. I don't know he might disagree, but I reckon I have.

**Andrew Luri:**

Working with Ben Lawrence is the best thing that ever happened in my life because he's the best director ever in so many ways. I had never acted before, but the way he was doing things gave me a lot of confidence. It built me up. Even things that were a bit difficult, he made it easy for me because he's able to go step by step and he's a very patient person. He's kind and respectful at the same time, so he's everything. I really hope to work with him again.

**Hayley McElhinney:**

Working with Ben's been beautiful, and he knows this story inside and out because he co-wrote it. It's been a great kind of mixture of him being very clear about what he wants but also allowing you to create and bring Josie to life. So, it's been a real collaboration. It's the best way to work, I think. He's really encouraging of you to breathe life into the character but then every now and then will give you this clear, clean direction. It's been ideal for me. I've loved it. I love that everyone is trying to do their best in this story and it's not necessarily the right thing to do.

In a way, Ben shoots kind of like a documentary. The way that he goes about shooting the film he's witnessing moments rather than trying to capture them, so I have a feeling that the film's going to be full of these, this really authentic experience.

**Bolude Watson:**

He's unafraid to explore and to try new things and to take on board what the actor wants to bring to the character. I definitely felt like it was collaborative that he listened to my opinions. Every day on set with Ben was just this nugget of wisdom that he would just drop in the water and I was able to take on, you know what I mean? I love the fact that he embraced all about the African ethnicity. He wasn't going to soften it, or alter it, or make it palpable with the audience with a weave or straighten my hair. He's like, 'No, we love your curls. She should have her curls and they should be out. They should be celebrated and be proud of it.'

Then he wrote my pregnancy into the script and it's like, 'Ben, who are you? No one does that.' Just constantly supportive. I feel that working with him is probably, I'm just hoping it's not a once in a lifetime opportunity. I'm hoping I'll get two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 more opportunities with him because I will never forget this experience. I will never forget working with him. I will never forget what he's taught me.

**On working with Andrew Luri**

**Ben Lawrence:**

Finding Andrew was something that I dreamt about for a long time. I really wanted that character to be a non-actor in that the chemistry that a non-actor brings to the chemistry a trained actor brings is to mix those two and while it was ... You know, people have done it, it was an experiment for me, but I thought it was going to pay off in a very particularly authentic relationship between those two people.

Andrew came out of a Facebook open casting call in Melbourne. We're in the suburb of Sunshine. We set up in a community hall for two or three days and I didn't realize at the time, but Andrew had called earlier in the day and said, look, I'm 60 kilometres away. I'm really tired. He was driving a truck at the time and he said I don't think I'm going to make it in. And the casting agent kind of convinced him, no,

please come along. He was one of 12 or 15 I think we saw that day and I had a vision of what Sebastian looked like and the presence that he had. And as soon as Andrew walked in the room, I thought it was him. And I hoped that he was going to give me something that would only further cement that idea.

And he told me the story about his life in that casting session. He told me how much he loved music. He told me how that he was a preacher in his local church and he told me about his journey from South Sudan to Australia. And the gentleness and the confidence and the stillness with which he composed himself in there. I walked out there thinking that's him.

It was probably one of the biggest decisions in the film to say, yeah, he could do it and put our faith in him. And the one thing that really convinced me about Andrew was that his desire to do it was strong. And that if what he'd been through was so powerful in his life, that if he wanted to be in a film, that this was a surmountable thing that he could achieve. And that with the guidance of all of our support, that he could do it. And he just did such an amazing job. He did such an amazing job. And I'm so happy for the experience that it gave him.

### **Hugo Weaving:**

I first met Andrew with Ben [Lawrence] and with Nico Lathouris. Nico was kind of acting guru and a wonderful actor in his own right. When I first met Andrew, he'd learnt a lot, but Nico was in pains to make sure that each time we did a scene the first thing that we would say was just, let's just read the scene in the third person. Andrew was constantly trying to tell the story of the character in his own words. That was where we started.

So, day one, two, three of the film working with Andrew, the scenes would be kind of dealt with in that way. The scene as written might be half a page with three lines but the scene as shoot was initially ballooning out. There were extra lines and you knew it wasn't ever going to be there in the cut but then you do it again, you do it again, you do another take. Ben would be saying 'Okay so now Andrew that's great, we can just use less lines. Okay, great Andrew. Let's do it again, we can just use the script now.' That's where we sort of started. Watching Andrew move from that man to, even three days later, where we didn't need to go through that process as much and I'm doing a scene with him and he's telling me a long story and I'm just listening and it's absolutely beautiful. It's been a real privilege. It's been a real joy actually to see someone learn so much and have such a life experience. But bring the wealth of their own experience as a gift to the film and have Ben see the value in that for everyone. Not just for Andrew but for everyone.

### **Hayley McElhinney**

I've loved everyone I've worked with. I love working with everyone because they come from different backgrounds. For example, Andrew, this is his first film, so it's been great working with someone who hasn't got a history in filmmaking. It's been fascinating because you don't come with a certain energy, show biz energy. He hasn't had that, so it's been fascinating to work with him.

### **On Working with Hayley McElhinney**

### **Ben Lawrence:**

She just had this wonderful, I want to say innocence, but there was something about Hayley, that told me that despite whatever she was going to overcome in her life, that she was going to keep a positive quality that nurtured and maintained her innocence and curiosity about the world. And it was something that I felt that Josie had that was kind of this quality that Dan, the photographer would come

home and be nurtured by and be supported by and all the horrible stuff that he'd seen out there in war, he comes home to someone who is able to reconnect with the idea of ... refill his innocence, refill his humanity, which ultimately becomes what that character needs to find.

**Hugo Weaving:**

"Hayley's absolutely gorgeous. Hayley and I met, I think we first met properly at the Sydney Theater Company. There was a production of Uncle Vanya, which we were both in that ended up being pretty celebrated. We had a season in Sydney and a year later we were invited to Washington. Then the year after that we were invited to New York. We traveled with that play and with each other as a cast. The cast didn't change and included Cate Blanchett, Jackie Weaver, Richard Roxburgh and John Bell. I mean, pretty fabulous people. Hayley and I, the characters Hayley and I we're inhabiting, her character is absolutely in love with my character. My character sort of knows that but actually is in love with another woman. We have these fantastic scenes which are quite sweet and comedic and painful of missed love. That was over a three year period, so we got to know each other very well.

"I was thrilled when I heard she was testing for this and went along and tested with her. It's been a great pleasure to play these two characters because there's very little of Dan and Josie that we see where they're just good together. But we know that they are. We actually don't see a lot of that. There're primarily secret, unspoken things and major trauma with the two of them. They're running parallel lives without really connecting. You've got to know that they are good together. I think having spent time with Hayley as an actor and enjoying her company and getting on very well and having a very easy rapport with her is kind of critical to playing these two characters. "

**On Working with Bolude Watson**

**Ben Lawrence:**

Finding Bolude was incredible. Bolude turned up at our casting session and she had her, I think her two or three year old son in the casting room running amok. While she's doing probably one of the most difficult scenes in the film. And she just nailed it.

Bolude wasn't what I imagined Anishka was going to be. So when I saw Bolude do that test, she just earned it there and then. And she was able to incorporate her four year old son who was running around in the audition into the scene as a mother in accent. That blew me away. And continually, she continued to impress me. And again, she really wanted to go there. She really wanted to understand the role. She really wanted to dedicate the time. She really wanted to find the right accent.

The other thing was she was pregnant at the time. She was three or four months pregnant when we cast her and so the character wasn't pregnant so we wrote that in. It became this really weird feature because Josie, Dan's wife is pregnant. So you had these two main pregnant women and I think people are going to kind of see the film and say, why do you have the two main women pregnant? It wasn't an intent, but it really highlights that the film is about, in a lot of ways, what we pass on to our children and and whatever that is, begins very early. It begins in our childhood and so to have it there as a constant reminder of these two pregnant bellies sits under the film as another bit of subtext.

**Shooting with the Choir / Music in the Film**

**Hugo Weaving:**

It has been lovely meeting all the people in the choir and the musicians. They're all musicians in their

own right, from different parts of the globe and all living here. That seems to be at the heart of the film. The musical heart of the film. There's something about that choir that Dan's drawn to, the choir by Sebastian. It's the thing that allows them both to heal.

Sebastian has set up this choir as a way of healing himself and creating a community outside the community that he's lost. He wants Dan to come to photograph this choir but there are other reasons he wants Dan to be a part of it. Dan instinctively feels that there's something about community and about family and about creating a new life for himself that somehow is going to be signposted by his experience with the choir. Working with all of those guys and sitting there, for me, well I just have to sit and listen to this beautiful music. It was actually really lovely.

Muhammad playing his kora was a treat for me. It's pretty much my favorite instrument. I don't play it. I don't play any instruments, but I love the kora. It was really great to have him sit there and play it. And Dereb is a beautiful Ethiopian singer and it's a beautiful song. Just a treat to hear that."

**Andrew Luri:**

I enjoyed the scene at that hall. It was an enjoyable thing because I actually love music, so whenever music is involved in something I feel at home. So, having people around like that is just bring joy to me, so it was a great day for me.

Music is my hobby. Music is such a thing that, you cannot always be by yourself, you have to be with somebody. You have to be with the people, and people make it happen, and with people it makes it life. Even this choir, everyone is from a different country and it's actually showing exactly what the film is about. So, having them is such a beautiful thing, and they're all professional musicians as well. They're not just people, they're professional musicians. They love music as much as I do. We have our own song, even the song that I've written. It's a great experience to bring the words together because the words are actually from different region, but this will bring the whole community together, wherever they are in part of the world. It will unite them and bring them as one.

**On the Themes at the Heart of the Film**

**Hugo Weaving:**

One of my favorite scenes so far is Ben deciding he would do something that was unscripted. We'd just go around in the circle in the choir and everyone introduces themselves and what country they're from. The camera just moving from one face to another and they say hi, I'm so and so and I'm from such and such a place. That was it. That was the scene, but it was beautiful. Really beautiful and somehow doing that speaks volumes for everyone's journey and story in life and yet you're in a circle together. Those sorts of things are really critical to understanding what's at the heart of this film and why it's being made. Because we easily demonize outsiders. We easily create outsiders. Not just in this country, around the world. It's something governments do with alarming facility to try and win the next election. They'll sort of demonize say, the South Sudanese community. Say 'Well crime is rampant in Melbourne and these people are to blame and therefore we should all tighten our belts and re-elect our government because we're going to be really tough on this.' Actually, the issue is either not necessarily there or it's not there to nearly that alarming degree. Or it's just one of many other issues in the community.

This story speaks to a world problem of a massive refugee crisis, migration all around the world, war, poverty, over population around the world. It's something that governments tend to be, at the moment,

addressing by just pulling up the drawbridge and saying we're going to deal with this on our own. We'll wave a flag and make our country great and f\*&% the rest of you. That's the alarming development in the world. That sense of working together as a world of nations is increasingly becoming, 'Well, we'll just deal with our own.' Patch a turf and we will alarm the people in our country so we can create other people who are alarming. That will enable us to stay in power and close our borders. It's particularly important for the South Sudanese community in this country at the moment or any community of migrants or refugees in Australia.

It's a worldwide phenomenon and I think anything that helps you to understand how and what someone's culture is, how they think, how they feel, that their outward appearance is not anything to be scared of, is special. Because they are just the same as you. We all eat and sleep and love and loose. We're all the same. I think this film is beautiful because of that. I hope it sees a large audience.

## **CAST BIOGRAPHIES**

### **HUGO WEAVING** (Dan Fisher)

Hugo Weaving has enjoyed an enormously varied and successful career in film, theatre and television.

He has won numerous awards, including three Australian Film Institute awards for Best Actor in a Leading Role - in Jocelyn Moorhouse's *PROOF* (1991), *THE INTERVIEW* (1998) - for which he also won Best Actor at The Montreal World Film Festival, and *LITTLE FISH* (2005). In 2011, he was an inaugural AACTA award winner for his performance in *ORANGES AND SUNSHINE*. In 2015 he won his second AACTA award for *THE DRESSMAKER*. In 2016 he won another for his work in *HACKSAW RIDGE*, and followed this up in 2017 with another for *JASPER JONES*.

Weaving is also well known for his roles in *THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT* (1994), as Agent Smith in *THE MATRIX* trilogy, as Elrond in *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* and *THE HOBBIT* trilogies, and as 'V' in *V FOR VENDETTA* (2006). Other films include *LAST RIDE* (2009), *CAPTAIN AMERICA* (2011), *CLOUD ATLAS* (2012), *MYSTERY ROAD* (2013), *THE MULE* (2014) and *STRANGERLAND* (2015). Hugo's recent TV credits include *PATRICK MELROSE* released in 2018 and Australian series *SEVEN TYPES OF AMBIGUITY* (2016).

His many theatre appearances include Sydney Theatre Company's *ARTURO UI*, as well as *HEDDA GABLER* and *UNCLE VANYA* (both enjoying successful U.S. tours in 2006 and 2011 respectively, the latter earning him a Helen Hayes Award), *MACBETH* (2014), *ENDGAME* (2015) and *WAITING FOR GODOT* (2013) with a London season in 2015.

He has also voiced characters in several highly successful films, including *BABE*, *HAPPY FEET* and *TRANSFORMERS*.

### **ANDREW LURI** (Sebastian Aman)

Andrew Luri was born in Juba which is now the capital of South Sudan. He came to Australia via Cairo Egypt, to Darwin then to Melbourne. He is married and has seven children. Music is his hobby and he is a Church and community leader.

Andrew loves comedy and studied at Charles Darwin University, he also studied Counter Terrorism at Swinburne University. He is multi skilled and has had many different jobs over the years.

*Hearts and Bones* is his first film and the culmination of a childhood dream.

### **HAYLEY MCELHINNEY** (Josie Avril)

An accomplished stage and screen actress, Hayley McElhinney is a graduate of the prestigious Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts.

Television credits include series regular, *Penny* in *Doctor Doctor* (1-3) and *Jenny Wallace* in the Channel 7 award winning miniseries *Peter Allen: Not the Boy Next Door*. *Rizzoli & Isles*, *My Place*, *Twentyfourseven*, *Always Greener*, *All Saints*, *Blue Heelers*, *Love is a Four Letter Word*, *Backberner*, *Water Rats* and *Good Guys Bad Guys*.

On the big screen, Hayley recently featured as *Ruth* in the sci-fi drama *Love You Twice* and *Claire* in the critically acclaimed psychological thriller *The Babadook*, with other feature film credits including *Redd Inc*, *My Mother Frank* and *City Loop* and recently completed shooting the feature *Hearts and Bones*, as well as Jeremy Sims directed feature *Rams*, alongside Sam Neill and Michael Caton.

As a member of the Sydney Theatre Company from 2006-2009, Hayley performed in *Uncle Vanya*, *The War of the Roses*, *Gallipoli*, *The Serpent's Teeth*, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Art of War*, *The Season at Sarsaparilla*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *The Lost Echo*, *Bed and Mother Courage and Her Children*, for which she received the Sydney Theatre Award for *Best Supporting Actress* in 2006.

Her other stage credits include *Pride and Prejudice* and *Life After George* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *A Moment on the Lips* (Old Fitzroy Theatre), *Noir* and *Don't Stare Too Much* (Darlinghurst Theatre), *Medea* (Steamworks) *Uncle Vanya*, *Proof*, *Buried*, *Darling Oscar*, *Family Running for Mr Whippy* (Blackswan) and *The Danger Age* (Deckchair Theatre).

### **BOLUDE WATSON** (Anishka Ahmed)

Bolude Watson is a Nigerian born American raised actress. Moving to Sydney, Australia in 2014 from Los Angeles, has proven to flourish her career, starring in Ché Baker's SciFi film 'Blue World Order' as female lead Marion Connors and most recently she just wrapped the film 'Hearts and Bones' directed by Australia's brilliant director, Ben Lawrence where she played Anishka the wife of a South Sudanese immigrant with a dark secret.

Bolude's television credits include roles in shows such as 'Deadly Women' and 'Your Numbers Up'.

Bolude is also co-creator with Michela Carattini of The web series 'Americans in Oz' which made its online debut last year.

As an African American and with a deep passion for story telling Bolude's goal is to be part of the movement that creates a space for diverse voices in film and television.

## **CREW BIOGRAPHIES**

### **BEN LAWRENCE** (Writer and Director)

Ben Lawrence is an internationally award-winning director and photographer. His short films have screened at Edinburgh, Clermont-Ferrand, Los Angeles, San Gio and Sao Paulo film festivals.

His photographs have been recognised at the International Photography Awards in New York, The Australian National Photographic Gallery Portrait Prize, the HeadOn Portrait Festival and The Spider Awards for photojournalism in London.

In 2018, his critically acclaimed debut feature documentary, *Ghosthunter* screened at multiple festivals around the world and was nominated for a prestigious Illuminate Award at the Sheffield Film Festival. It also earned an AACTA Award nomination for Best Feature Length Documentary and won the Best Australian Documentary Award at the Sydney Film Festival.

### **MATT REEDER** (Producer)

Matt Reeder is a multi award-winning feature film producer. He produced the feature film *The Little Death*, which had its world premiere at the TIFF in 2014 and went on to win the Audience Award at SxSW in 2015. Magnolia Pictures theatrically released *The Little Death* in North America in 2015.

Prior to that his feature film *WEST*, had its world premiere at the 2007 Berlin Film Festival.

In 2016 his third feature as producer *Joe Cinque's Consolation*, based on Helen Garner's best selling book had its World Premiere at the TIFF and was theatrically released in Australia.

*Hearts and Bones* is his fourth feature as producer.

He is a graduate of the prestigious writing and production course at the University of Technology, Sydney.

### **BEATRIX CHRISTIAN** (Co-Writer)

Her film *Jindabyne* for Ray Lawrence (*Lantana*), starring Laura Linney and Gabriel Byrne, was selected for Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival in 2006.

Other screenplays include *Garden Boy* for Future Films UK, *Rosa* for Ray Lawrence and producers Su Armstrong, Emma Slade, and Barrie Osborn, and *Shadow Warrior* and *Wedding Dress* for See Saw Films. She has recently completed writing four out of six episodes of the FemantleMedia adaptation of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, which screened at Foxtel in 2018.

Beatrix's television credits include *White Collar Blue* (Network Ten), *MDA* (ABCTV) and the mini-series *A Dangerous Fortune*, and *The Whiteout for Network Movie* and *Constantin Germany*.

She has developed *Logue's Diaries* for producers Iain Canning, Jamie Laurenson and Emile Sherman for See Saw Films (*The King's Speech*, *Tracks*, *Oranges* and *Sunshine*) and the BBC.

**HUGH MILLER** (Director of Photography)

Hugh Miller graduated from AFTRS in 2002. During his time at film school, he received numerous ACS awards and the prestigious Kodak Award for Best Cinematography at the New York International Student Film Festival. In 2003, he won the Best Cinematography Award at Tropfest.

His feature work includes: *Prime Mover*; *Two Fists, One Heart*; *Right Here Right Now*; *Three Blind Mice*; *Orange Love Story*; *The Bet*; *Solo*, directed by Morgan O'Neill and starring Colin Friels; and *Lou* directed by Belinda Chayko and starring John Hurt.

Hugh also shot the 2015 feature documentary *Sherpa*, which won Best Feature Documentary at the FCCA Award and the London Film Festival, and was nominated for the 2016 AACTA Award for Best Cinematography in a Documentary. Most recently Hugh shot *Ghosthunter*, Ben Lawrence's feature documentary which was nominated for Best Cinematography and Best Feature Length Documentary at the 2018 AACTA Awards.

**CARLO CRESCINI** (Production Designer)

With a passion for all things visually interesting- from striking minimalism; to richly textured worlds; to graphic colour blocking- Carlo creatively uses space, shape, colour and objects to bring his visions to life.

A graduate of the Bachelor of Design: Visual Communications from the University of Technology Sydney, Carlo's impressive design credits include Heath Davis's film *Locusts*, Sasha Hadden's film *Liebe*; and season two of the popular factual series *War on Waste*.

Having worked in the industry for more than 15 years, Carlo commenced his career working at the ABC. In his time as *Art Director*, he worked with Sam Rickard on the highly successful Channel Seven series *Packed to the Rafters*, on Abe Forsythe's film *Little Monsters*, on both the ABC Television drama series *Pulse* and Janet King with Sam Hobbs, as well as the comedy series *Here Come the Habibs* and the telemovie *Mary: The Making of a Princess*.

His commercial experience include brands Ikea and Weetabix, and he's also styled events for Myer, The Iconic, and Bulgari.

Through his love of creating worlds, and bringing depth to characters through their backstory, Carlo tasks himself to visually enhance each project and create something truly memorable.

He is currently working on Luke Eve's feature film *I Met a Girl* filming in Western Australia.

**RITA CARMODY** (Costume Designer)

Rita has worked extensively across both theatre and television as a costume designer, stylist and costume supervisor. Motivated by the power of costume in good story telling Rita strives to enrich character development and the overall production with her costume choices.

Rita is currently designing the second season of the critically acclaimed Stan series *The Other Guy*. She was Costume Designer on the ABCMe childrens series *Hardball*.

She has also styled campaigns for major brands including Optus, Audible and Youth off the Streets and most recently Rita was in The Philippines styling footage used for the opening ceremony of the Islamic Solidarity Games.

Rita has designed sets and costumes for a range of theatre companies including; Griffin Theatre Company, The Ensemble, Monkey Baa, Riverside, Darlinghurst Theatre Company, Rock Surfers and ATYP.

Rita is a 2007 NIDA graduate and has lectured and tutored in Design at UNSW, NIDA and AIM.

Rita's love of character, clothes and storytelling are what propel her forward in her career. She loves her job and loves a costume challenge.

**LEAH TAYLOR** (Hair & Make-Up Designer)

Leah Taylor is a Sydney based hair and makeup designer with credits including The little death, Indigo lake, Dream Baby, Mother, Love at fifth site, and the yet to be released ABC shock treatment series Scout, Killer Native and The Shore.

Focusing much of her career on indigenous film making with multi award winning films and tv series such as Kiki & Kitty, The Wrong kind of Black, Brown lips, 8mmm, & Black Comedy. Along with her film & tv projects, Leah also works in advertising, beauty and fashion campaigns, and SBS television station.

**RAFAEL MAY** (Composer)

Rafael May is a screen composer whose music brings together a melancholic beauty, taut emotion, with resonant sense of grace.

In 2018, Rafael was AACTA Music nominee for Ghosthunter (Madman/SBS), as well as APRA Screen Music Nominee for both Ghosthunter and Lawless (Genepool/Foxtel). Other recent music scores include Afghanistan: The Australian Story (Ch7) and Vitamania (Genepool/SBS/Arte). Australia In Colour (Stranger than Fiction/SBS) and After The Oasis (Shark Institute) are in post-production. He has also scored the exhibition James Cameron Challenging The Deep (Luscious/Avatar Alliance Foundation/Aust. Nat. Maritime Museum). His previous features include Black Water and The Reef.