



RABBIT

NO TWIN IS IDENTICAL

ADELAIDE CLEMENS, ALEX RUSSELL, VEELE BATTENS, JONNY PASVOLSKY AND CHARLES MAYER
THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FILM CORPORATION PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PREMIERE FUND
A LONGSHOT AND PROJECTOR FILMS PRODUCTION
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANNA HOWARD ACS, PRODUCTION DESIGNER AMY BAKER, CASTING GREG APPS, MAKEUP BEC BURATTO, COSTUME DESIGN ANITA SEILER
SOUND DESIGNER TOM HEUZENROEDER, MUSIC COMPOSER MICHAEL DARREN, VFX CUMULUS VISUAL EFFECTS, EDITOR STEUART MORLEY
CO-PRODUCERS DANIEL JOYCE AND MICHAEL DARREN, EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS CLEMENT DUNN, BRYCE MENZIES, MARK WOODS, GREG APPS AND TINE KLINT
PRODUCER DAVID NGO, WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY LUKE SHANAHAN

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ALMOST A YEAR AFTER HER IDENTICAL TWIN'S DISAPPEARANCE, 25 YEAR OLD MEDICAL STUDENT MAUDE ASHTON IS STILL HAUNTED BY VISIONS OF HER VIOLENT ABDUCTION. CONVINCED SHE IS STILL ALIVE, MAUDE FOLLOWS THE CLUES TO A DERELICT CARAVAN PARK WHERE SHE DISCOVERS HER FATE IS INTRINSICALLY LINKED TO THAT OF HER SISTER, WHILE THE ENTIRE EXPERIMENT IS CONTROLLED BY A 'SECRET SOCIETY' THAT LIKES TO WATCH.

Maude, a 25-year-old medical student living in Germany, is trying to pick up the pieces after her identical twin's disappearance almost a year ago. Maude and Cleo are chalk and cheese – Maude responsible, studious and academic; Cleo impulsive, irresponsible and a gifted athlete.

When visions of Cleo's violent abduction begin manifesting as hallucinations, Maude decides to return home to face her grieving family in Australia. Back at home more and more details begin appearing in her nightmares and Maude begins questioning her sanity. But are these just the creations of a troubled mind or psychic communications?

Convinced Cleo is still alive, Maude decides to follow the visions to whatever end and is joined by Cleo's fiancée Ralph and Henry, the police detective obsessed with the case. The trio trace Cleo's movements to an isolated caravan park where they spend the night with a group of eccentric residents.

Not long after, Henry disappears and Maude and Ralph are drugged, kidnapped and taken to 'The

Big House' - a mansion deep in the forest where a strange "family" have a very unusual way of treating their guests.

If Maude wants to see her sister again she'll have to go through with a series of strange experiments.

Is this all just some sick game?

Or do twins indeed hold the key to extraordinary psychic powers?

As Maude discovers the truth about her sister, she learns that she may be able to alter fate - but she can't escape it.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

RABBIT is a modern fable about fate, destiny and the paths we choose.

I've had the privilege of growing up alongside a set of identical twins. Not family, but very close. I had a "voyeuristic curiosity" from watching this set of identical twins grow up together, grow apart and then find each other again. The nature of their "sympatico" relationship had produced such a level of "internal" claustrophobia that both twins were even pushed to live at opposite ends of the planet for a while.

The concept behind RABBIT was to introduce a horrific 'event' and explore a genetic link between identical twins and their ability to communicate telepathically. I was interested in exploring how two characters, sharing 99 percent of the same DNA, deal with such feelings of loss, pain and guilt.

What if they could communicate such feelings to each other? On the surface this notion appeared to be quite fantastical, but as I continued my research I discovered this to be not only feasible, but for many a very real phenomenon; that one twin could warn the other of their impending fate.

With this, a question arose that provided the central premise for RABBIT - 'Can we escape our own fate?'

With Maude's story I wanted to rail against a concept of controlling or manipulating behavior, with the notion that the human spirit can overcome anything. Maude behaves like her twin, she asks the same questions and reacts just like her sister Cleo, but when she chooses to dismiss her slightest instinct, another path is chosen.

It's a "sliding doors" dilemma, but in RABBIT the central question of genetically driven behaviour rather than decisions driven by environmental change is at the core. Nothing is ever black and white when it comes to human nature and when Maude is aware of the experiment and how she is "expected" to act, a question of accepting fate or rebelling against it arises.

Being a writer and director, the tonal aesthetic of the film was always in my head. The BIG PRINT was just as important as the narrative journey and character arcs of my leading players.

Tonally, the film has space. It has a measured breath. I see it providing a constant build of menace, a mood where you are unsure of who is to be trusted and whether what you are seeing is real, a dream or a figment of Maude's mind.

Visually, there is a distinction between Maude and Cleo's visions and the real world of the detective story. The visions take on a surreal feel and are shot in first person POV where Maude and the audience begin retracing Cleo's steps. I want the audience to experience this subjectively as Maude experiences this. Feel what she feels.

Early on, it's a deliberate decision to test the audience as to whether they believe they're watching reality or a dream. This happens as my camera style maintains a level of truth. I'm not talking about Terry Gilliam style "visual theatre" here, more a twisted or tweaked version of reality that Maude is trying to decipher.

In stark contrast, for the reality of our main narrative, we play the drama straight, captured with an almost voyeuristic lens that never intrudes; more a creeping camera than a charging one. Natural light (where possible) permeates the scene. Prac lights instead of large studio lighting.

A sense of normal is what makes these worlds so murky and unclear. Think Michael Haneke's *FUNNY GAMES* (1997), *HIDDEN* (2005) or Cronenberg's, *HISTORY OF VIOLENCE* (2005) – the later film captured entirely with a 28mm lens – keeping the drama open and free and not cramping the world. Wide angle lenses capturing master shots – expositionally summing up the scene.

LET THE RIGHT ONE IN (2008) is also an inspiration for the craft and design of *RABBIT*. There is a beauty in its composition, yet a slight of hand to the camera movement, music and art department. It's a tilted reality.

The character of the location is crucial. The city is cold, clinical, contrasting the warm and wild tones of the rural locations and derelict caravan park.

The "big house" is a real, breathing house – not a studio. We see real gardens and driveways. The society exists almost as if a feudal set up where the house on the hill controls the underlings beneath.

Editing is staccato in rhythm - scenes play in natural time emphasised by sharp offbeat cuts and transitions to make the audience experience Maude's constant state of unease. Scenes are kept wide, letting the drama play out, only punching in when necessary for emphasis and enhancing the menace as needed.

Regarding performance, we never drift into the unreal or "over the top". Our actors play the scene for the drama – not the horrific undertone of the bigger picture. The society are based on a fantastical construct but aren't handled with over the top theatrics. The neighbours, Minnie and Roman from *Rosemary's Baby* (and indeed the entire satanic cult of oldies from that film) are our characters, not the family from every other horror film you've ever seen.

They believe they're a "greater good" for society, existing on a higher plain. But my film isn't really about that secret group and I carefully avoided too heavy an emphasis on the "intellectual" nature of their studies.

I wanted to create a gothic fairytale but one that was rooted in contemporary "everywhere".

Rabbit is about a set of twins that are very closely connected but choose to avoid such a relationship.

My hope is that by the end of the film, the audience are left with Maude's dilemma that even if (she) or indeed we as a collective can avoid a certain fate for so long.... can we really ever escape it?



CLEO & MAUDE

ADELAIDE CLEMENS

RABBIT stars one of Australia's fastest rising talents, Adelaide Clemens, who's performances opposite screen legends like Benedict Cumberbatch, Keanu Reeves and Leonardo Dicaprio have been hailed by critics as "spell-binding", "revelatory" and "stole the show". She first graced the big screen in the blockbuster smash, X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE and has since been in THE GREAT GATSBY, SILENT HILL and GENERATION UM..., as well as the HBO series PARADE'S END and Netflix's RECTIFY. Most recently, she just completed filming the Martha Coolidge epic love story, MUSIC, WAR AND LOVE in Poland in the lead role opposite Connie Nielsen and Stellan Skarsgård.

This is a reunion for Adelaide and Alex Russell who both made their feature film debut in WASTED ON THE YOUNG.





ALEX RUSSELL

Alex was lead role in the hugely successful sci-fi film CHRONICLE. He then played opposite Julianne Moore and Chloe Grace Moretz in the re-make of CARRIE as well as appearing in Angelina Jolie's Oscar nominated war epic UNBROKEN. He has recently wrapped on both Sony's GRANITE MOUNTAIN with Josh Brolin and Jeff Bridges, Greg McLean's JUNGLE alongside Daniel Radcliffe, and is receiving rave reviews for his starring role in Ivan Sen's GOLDSTONE opposite Academy Award Winner Jackie Weaver.

His next lead role is in the new NBC Prime Time Drama, SWAT.

JONNY PASVOLSKY

Pasvolsky got his first break in his role (Rob Shelton/Matt Bosnich, 2005–2007) in McCLOUD'S DAUGHTERS, which he received a nomination for "Most Popular New Male Talent" at the Logie Awards of 2006. He has also appeared in the UNDERBELLY: A TALE OF TWO CITIES, and has had guest roles in several Australian television series: SEACHANGE, FARSCAPE, and ALL SAINTS. He starred as Mr. Hooper in HEY, HEY, IT'S ESTHER BLUEBURGER and played Antonio Morelli in the UK.TV mini-series FALSE WITNESS. Most recently he played opposite Johnny Depp, Gwyneth Paltrow and Ewan McGregor in David Koepp's thriller MORTDECAI.



NERIDA & KEITH

VEERLE BAETENS

In 2005 Veerle won the John Kraaijkamp Musical Award for her role in the theatre version of PIPPI LONGSTOCKING. In 2008 she won awards for her performance of Sara (the Flemish version of the TV show UGLY BETTY). After this TV show ended she starred in the movie, LOFT, quickly followed by CODE 37, where she played the tough police chief.

She starred in the Oscar nominated feature BROKEN CIRCLE BREAKDOWN, which also won her the Best Actress award at the 2013 European Film Awards. She played Sylvie in THE ARDENNES, as well as Lisa in BEYOND THE WALLS, and most recently is playing the lead role in the critically acclaimed, TABULA RASA.

CHARLES MAYER

Charles Mayer graduated from Guildhall School of Music & Drama in 2005 after finishing an 11 year career in the British Army, where he was an officer in the Welsh Guards. Having appeared in SPOOKS and HOTEL BABYLON for the BBC and on the West End stage in Bent, Charles went to Shanghai where he featured in IP MAN 2, SHANGHAI CALLING and various other feature and short films, as well as numerous theatre productions. Coming to Australia in 2012, Charles has been in ANZAC GIRLS, DEADLIN GALLIPOLI and SAM FOX EXTREME ADVENTURES on television and in the feature film THE PACK, along with short films, web series and several productions at State Theatre Company of South Australia. He is married to Cate and they have three small boys.



LUKE
SHANAHAN

LUKE SHANAHAN is one of Australia's most exciting young writer/directors.

Possessing a truly original body of work, he's best known for his black sense of humour and fluid visual style.

His award-winning portfolio of TV commercials, short drama and video clips have been lauded throughout the world. In 2009, he wrote and directed the short film, IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO, a black comedy that went on to premiere at (MIFF) Melbourne Intl Film Festival and then screen at Palm Springs, San Francisco, L.A, Chicago, Rotterdam and 14 other festivals. The film showcased Luke's mood and visual style while introducing the dark undercurrent of sibling rivalry and disturbing awkwardness that would become a mainstay of his work.

His next critical smash was the short film, THE NEWS, which premiered at TROPFEST (2010) and has since screened at over 30 festivals as well as having been voted one of the top twenty comedies of the year at FUTURESHORTS.com.

He again teamed up with Damon Herriman and Josh Lawson for the prequel, PET 2012 that premiered in LA that year.

Between several developing film projects both in Australia and overseas, he is an in-demand commercial and video-clip director, (repped by MOXIE pictures worldwide) and home to Edgar Wright, Ben Wheatley and Todd Haynes. www.moxiepictures.com



DAVID
NGO

In 2008 DAVID NGO produced JACKIE'S SPRING PALACE (Tropfest Finalist) and soon signed a development deal with Movie Network Channel to develop the comedy series THE MAN FRIDAY PROJECT.

David then established the production and post-production company Projector Films, which has completed several award winning films and TV series, including TOUGH JOBS (ABC), MY GENERATION (SBS), A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS (Channel 10), and the features BOYS ARE BACK, directed by Scott Hicks, BROKEN HILL starring Alexa Vega and Academy Award Winner Timothy Hutton, and BBQ, which opened the 2017 SXSW Film Festival.

He has since produced the AADC award winning ad campaign for STONECHAPEL WINES, the Sudanese war Im PAPER PLANES (California Int. FF - Winner: Best Foreign Film), the multi-award winning drama COLLISION (60th Melbourne International Film Festival, Palm Springs), EP'd the controversial ABC documentary MEATWORK and supervised the AACTA and KidScreen NY winning animation series THE ADVENTURES OF FIGARO PHO (ABC, Net ix, BBC Kids).

Recently David produced Nick Matthews' critically acclaimed feature debut ONE EYED GIRL (Austin Film Festival - Winner: Dark Matters Best Picture) and is currently working on Luke Shanahan's dark fairytale RABBIT, which won David Best Producer at the 2015 Melbourne International Film Festival, and the Scandinavian crime/thriller PLAN C (EP: XYZ Films).

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY - ANNA HOWARD

Anna Howard (ACS) started her career as a camera assistant, working for some of Australia's best cinematographers, including Peter James and Academy Award winners Russell Boyd, Andrew Lesnie and John Seale.

As a DOP she has worked with directors such as Ray Lawrence and Gillian Armstrong and her credits include Gillian Armstrong's feature documentary WOMEN HE'S UNDERESSED, the features SOUTH SOLITARY, HEY HEY ITS ESTHER BLUEBURGER and ERRORS OF THE HUMAN BODY, and the television series RAKE and MARKING TIME.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER – AMY BAKER

Amy Baker's credits as designer include on the new television series THE OTHER GUY, starring Matt Okine, to be broadcast on STAN and the iview commission F*CKING ADELAIDE. Amy was set decorator on the acclaimed series DEEP WATER and on the WOLF CREEK television series, associate production designer and set decorator on the feature GIRL ASLEEP and set decorator on the film ALEX & EVE. Additional art department credits include LAST CAB TO DARWIN, THE WATER DIVINER, TRACKS, THE BABADOOK and THE ROVER. Amy is also a talented artist.

EDITOR - STUART MORLEY

Stuart Morley started as an assistant under Karl Sodersten (editor of LANTANA and JINDABYNE). He went on to edit MEN'S GROUP (directed by Michael Joy) which was awarded Best Film at the IF Awards in 2008.

His other feature film credits as additional editor include ANY QUESTIONS FOR BEN?, DRIFT, I FRANKENSTEIN and LAST CAB TO DARWIN, all edited by Marcus Darcy.

Stuart has also edited the short films, PET and FIRST DATE (directed by Luke Shanahan).



COMPOSER – MICHAEL DARREN

Michael Darren is an award-winning composer, musician and sound designer. Michael began composing for theatre at just 15 and at 20

In 1995 he composed the theme for the ABC television show RECOVERY which began his path composing and sound designing for film and television as well as theatre. His many film and television credits as a composer since then include THE ADVENTURES OF FIGARO PHO, a multi-award winner at the 2013 AACTA Awards, ON HER KNEES, director Ashlee Page's contribution to the screen adaptation of Tim Winton's THE TURNING, and Nick Matthews' ONE EYED GIRL, which won awards at the Austin and Beverly Hills Film Festivals.

SOUND DESIGNER – TOM HEUZENROEDER

Tom Heuzenroeder has worked in film and television sound post-production for over 20 years, both in Australia and abroad. After studying audio engineering and music composition in the mid 1990s, he ran a studio in Adelaide, writing and recording music for commercials and corporate productions. Moving into feature film, in 2006 he received an AFI/AACTA award for his sound design work on TEN CANOES (Director: Rolf de Heer) and in 2009 was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for GLASS: A PORTRAIT OF PHILIP IN TWELVE PARTS (Director: Scott Hicks). Since then, Tom has also worked on DOCTOR WHO - SERIES 7 (BBC TV), ANZAC GIRLS (Screentime) and CHARLIE'S COUNTRY (Director: Rolf de Heer), for which he won the Australian Screen Sound Guild's Andrew Plain Award for Best Film Sound Design. Most recently he has worked on ALI'S WEDDING (Director: Jeffrey Walker).

COSTUME DESIGNER – ANITA SEILER

Costume designer Anita Seiler is another Rabbit key creative from Adelaide's fine film talent pool. She is highly regarded for her work on films such as SNOWTOWN, LAST RIDE, A MONTH OF SUNDAYS, CLOSED FOR WINTER and OPAL DREAM, amongst many other film and television credits.

HEAD HAIR AND MAKE-UP ARTIST - REBECCA BURATTO

Rebecca Buratto is known for her work on ONE EYED GIRL, BOYS IN THE TREES, GIRL ASLEEP, DEADLINE GALLIPOLI and 52 TUESDAYS.

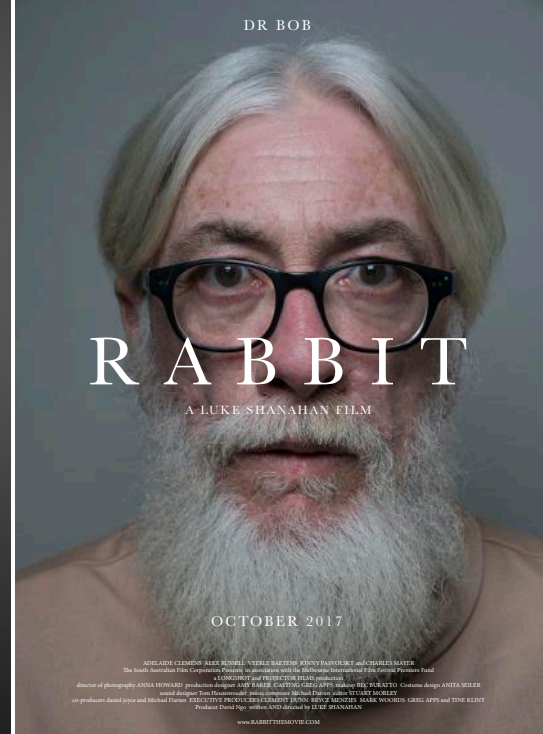




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LONGSHOT





BEN BAKER

“I had sketched out early an idea for truthful portraits that could possibly be used for teasers or key art down the track. I tracked down Ben Baker who is now one of the worlds top portrait photographers - an Adelaide boy doing amazing work in New York. www.benbakerphoto.com. Fresh from shooting The Trump’s, The Obama’s and everyone else in politics. I brought him home to truthfully shoot the characters. My story is fantastical but I wanted it treated truthfully by all departments.” Luke Shanahan





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