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SLOW WEST



A Film By John Maclean

Starring: Michael Fassbender, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Ben Mendelsohn



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SHORT SYNOPSIS

At the end of the 19th century, sixteen-year-old Jay Cavendish (Kodi Smit-McPhee) journeys across the American frontier in search of the woman he loves. He is joined by Silas (Michael Fassbender), a mysterious traveller, and hotly pursued by an outlaw along the way.

SYNOPSIS

Set in 19th century Colorado but undeniably European in sensibility, SLOW WEST tells the story of sixteen-year-old Jay Cavendish as he travels from Scotland to Colorado in pursuit of his lost love.

Quickly confronted by the dangers of the American frontier, he teams up with a mysterious traveller named Silas, who agrees to protect him - for a price. Jay's quest will be one of double-crossing, violence and peril as the guileless adolescent learns that the West takes no pity, least of all on the innocent.

ABOUT THE FILM

SLOW WEST is a western adventure set in late 19th Century Colorado, centered on a young man's epic search for the love of his life.

Michael Fassbender stars as Silas Selleck, a mysterious and inscrutable stranger acting as the paid protector to sixteen-year-old Scottish aristocrat Jay Cavendish (Kodi Smit-McPhee), who is on a reckless journey through the American Wild West.

Jay has grown up in the Scottish Highlands with Rose Ross (Caren Pistorius), a humble farmer's daughter. As they mature, friendship grows into something deeper for Jay. When her father (Rory McCann) has to flee to America after a tragedy, Rose is suddenly torn from Jay's life. Heartbroken, Jay turns his back on his privileged life and sets off to find Rose and win her heart.

The monosyllabic frontiersman Silas seems to have an agenda of his own as he accompanies the naive, lovelorn Jay across the beautiful but threatening landscape. It is a strange and unconquerable world peopled by all manner of desperate eccentrics, including an intimidating posse of outlaws led by Payne (Ben Mendelsohn), a man whose every past trespass and trespass against him is etched on his heavily inked skin.

Payne seems to have a prior acquaintance with Silas, but their current relationship is indecipherable and it is difficult to see who has Jay's real interests at heart and how the strangers Jay encounters will impact his quest.

SLOW WEST is the feature debut of John Maclean, BAFTA award-winning director of the short film PITCH BLACK HEIST, which also starred and was executive produced by Michael Fassbender. SLOW WEST was produced by Conor

McCaughan of DMC Film (PITCH BLACK HEIST), Iain Canning and Emile Sherman of See-Saw Films (SHAME, TRACKS) and Rachel Gardner of Rachel Gardner Films. The film was developed by Film4 and is co-financed by Film4, the British Film Institute, the New Zealand Film Commission and Fulcrum Media Finance. This is the second collaboration between Film4, the BFI and John Maclean following his BAFTA-winning PITCH BLACK HEIST.

An unconventional western, SLOW WEST is described by writer/director Maclean as being “mostly about young love.” He adds, “It is also a coming of age story. But it is a western seen through Scottish eyes with an outsider’s perspective. Through Jay, we see the reality of the Wild West at a time in America when there were Germans, Irish, Scottish and Swedish all displaced from their homelands and arriving in this new land, America.

“The subtext is more about the native culture than about the Scottish people going to America. When you research what happened to the Native Americans in the West, it is just absolutely horrific. I wanted to keep SLOW WEST about a young person’s search for love with everything else just bubbling under - the issues are not spoon-fed to you, they are just there.

“And because of all those aspects, it’s not a very typical western. I was more interested in surrealism and fairy tales and putting that into a western so hopefully it avoids all the clichés of the genre. I would say it’s more of a European road movie.”

Producer Iain Canning responded to the story’s alternative point of view. “It’s been fun to take the best bits of the way in which Hollywood has presented the western historically and add a European flavor to it,” he explains. “It’s an America that generationally was made up of lots of different people from lots of different places around the world. SLOW WEST captures that - whether it’s Silas being from Ireland or Jay being from Scotland or Payne being a couple of generations into being American, it’s a diverse tale of some of the early cultures coming into America.

“There was a coming of age, in a sense, of the American West. The Europeans arriving in America were naive, thinking that they were going to be able to leave their lives behind in Europe and start again. Jay embodies that, while Silas and Payne are characters that are of the past. In a way, the film is about the clashing of those two things: the innocent and the more worldly-wise characters.”

Rising teenage star Kodi Smit-McPhee, who plays the lovelorn Jay, sees the story from a young person’s perspective: “It definitely has the original Western feel about it, and it’s very grimy and tense with shoot-outs and blood and all that. But something you don’t usually see in Westerns is the emotion. It’s also seeing a Western from a younger point of view, so it’s a perfect hybrid of both emotion and action.”

Producer Rachel Gardner echoes Maclean when she describes the tone of the film: “There’s a fairytale element to the film and the storytelling - in many ways this film is an unrequited love story. The unrequited love that Jay has for Rose takes him on this incredible journey through an alien place with its strange, violent people and he has to face enormous challenges.”

According to director John Maclean, the original idea in writing the script came from a desire to link British costume drama of the Merchant Ivory genre with the American Western, incorporating the conflicts of the Scottish class system of the time - between the land-owning lairds and the tenant crofters. "But I really started with a blank page - two cowboys standing in a wheat field - and then the story just grew and grew over a couple of years."

To help him capture the tone of the film, the director immersed himself in contemporary fiction including the works of Mark Twain, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ambrose Bierce, and Laura Ingalls Wilder, which provided a first hand insight into the lives of the settlers and their attitudes towards Native Americans. He also watched several of the classic Westerns including John Ford's *IRON HORSE* for the period details of costumes and architecture, *SHANE*, *RED RIVER* and *HIGH NOON* for structural references, and modern Westerns such as the work of Sam Peckinpah and Robert Altman's *MCCABE AND MRS MILLER* for their different perspectives on the Western genre. His film references didn't stop there: he also took in early Japanese and Russian films.

The role of Silas was written for Fassbender and the actor became involved at an early stage. "We bashed the script around a lot and Michael came up with some great ideas. He was very much involved in the writing process. He's a great collaborator," says Maclean. "The script had to be of a high standard. Michael is more than just an actor, he wants to know about it all, so you have to raise the bar with him. He often plays characters who have something of the silent man type about them but who play with the macho archetype. Silas could have been the solitary macho type but Michael gives the character vulnerability. He's a man of few words but Michael could give him shades of grey despite that. All the characters have good and bad in them and it's Silas's relationship with Jay that changes him. He thought he knew how to live and survive and then discovers he's surviving but not living and that's what Jay teaches him."

Fassbender concurs, "Silas was a fun character to embody. He's a bounty hunter, a loner, who doesn't really have much in his life in terms of love and companionship and without much joy in his life. So he's become a bit bitter and cynical, and the introduction of Jay into his world infuses him with some feelings of hope and enthusiasm and commitment to something other than money."

"This story is very much about the land that we are in and America is very much a character," adds Fassbender. "The harsh realities of the Wild West and beyond, where the train line ends and what sort of characters are out there. Silas can survive very well out there, but Jay is hopeless and so the two of them get together and come to depend on one another."

Iain Canning adds, "Michael has a chameleon quality so he embodies the role not just on the surface, but he also portrays the emotional baggage and history that his characters have - whether that be Brandon in *SHAME* or Macbeth or Silas in *SLOW WEST*. The empathy that Michael is able to achieve through his work is unrivalled."

As the naive romantic Jay, Maclean cast Kodi Smit-McPhee. It was a challenging role not only for the physical demands but also for the narrative responsibilities - the film is told from his perspective. "Jay is trekking across America, and the audience is with him and his point of view on this journey," says the actor. "In his interactions with the people he meets you see little things that show how much of a fresh spirit he is and how loving he is towards the earth and music and nature and art. He's just a lone soul, acting upon what he feels and sees."

"I'd seen Kodi's early work, but even that didn't prepare me for the performance he gave," says Maclean. "He's watchable and intelligent beyond his years. He understood the role completely, even though he's only 17. Jay is naive and awkward but still able to hold his own with the difficult character of Silas."

Fassbender adds, "This character is a young dreamer and we wanted to find a young actor who could capture the naivety and ideals of first love, such that he would blindly travel to America and believe he could track down his lost love in such a vast land. Kodi was perfect for the role."

Canning agrees, "Kodi's such a fantastic actor and is able to hold his own with Michael Fassbender and Ben Mendelsohn. He really lights up the screen. Kodi has an innocence, but he also has a real understanding of craft. He's really quite special."

For the tattooed desperado Payne, Maclean cast Ben Mendelsohn. "Payne has a posse of eight people and they're following Jay and Silas," says Mendelsohn. "They're battered-around people who have been in a few fights, have a few scars and have a few tales to tell. He's after the bounty. Silas and Payne parted company and they haven't seen each other for a while, but since there's a good deal of money to be grabbed out there, it seems they're both after it."

Maclean wrote the Payne role with Mendelsohn in mind. He said, "I started thinking of Ben and he was always my number one choice. I had seen him in *ANIMAL KINGDOM*, *KILLING THEM SOFTLY*, and *THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES*. Three great films, but his character in *ANIMAL KINGDOM* had the sort of danger and darkness that I wanted for Payne. We only had him for four days on set but he was really intuitive and intelligent and funny. He's one of those actors who is able to play a character you're not sure whether to love or fear."

Newcomer Caren Pistorius was cast as Rose as a result of auditions in New Zealand and Australia. It was a character that Maclean hoped would not fall into the usual clichés. "Rose is not a typical damsel in distress and neither is she a typical woman with a shotgun," explains the director. "I wanted a strong female character who was different and who had all kinds of trouble foisted on her by men but could also defend herself without needing to be rescued by a man. Westerns have had great female characters, such as Joan Crawford and Mercedes McCambridge in *JOHNNY GUITAR* and Barbara Stanwyck in *FORTY GUNS*, but they can be quite butch and I thought it would be great to have a strong female character who would also be feminine and have to sort out all the trouble men leave behind."

“Caren wasn’t as famous or experienced as some of the other actors I auditioned but her Scottish accent was faultless and she was great and completely ready for the step up, in terms of role.”

Canning concurs, “Caren’s character and her performance have a power and strength that goes against some of the clichés of Westerns and even though the narrative suggests it is Jay’s journey, there are a few twists and turns on the way and I think Rose had to be performed with a strength that Caren really understood.”

Maclean was thrilled with his cast: “I couldn’t believe it when I went close-up on Michael and I’d think ‘wow’, and then close-up on Kodi and ‘wow’, and then close up on Ben and ‘wow.’ It’s amazing and I felt lucky to have such a cast for my first feature.”

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

A large part of the origin of this project lies in the relationship between writer/director/musician/music video maker John Maclean and actor Michael Fassbender.

Fassbender explains what attracted him to the project: “I wanted to do it because of John. We’d done a couple of short films together and it was the dream to make a feature film together and this was an idea that he had brewing for a good few years.”

Maclean adds, “Michael had seen some of my early work, which was just basically me with a camera and my mates making samurai films for fun. He saw something in it and we decided to work together. So I quickly wrote a short film called MAN ON A MOTORCYCLE. I knew I only had one day with him, so I got my mate to be the motorcycle courier for seven days and then when the helmet came off it was Michael - so it looked like I got more than I did. We had a lot of fun making it. I jumped on the back of Michael’s bike and just shot guerrilla on my mobile phone. It worked really well, so we got Film4 funding to do another short, PITCH BLACK HEIST, and I got three days with him and it also worked out really well, so we decided to make a feature.”

“It’s nice to see that journey through, so it’s nice to be here realizing that,” continues Fassbender. “Part of the draw was also that ever since I was a kid the idea of being in a Western has appealed to me, so it’s great to have been given the opportunity to do one.”

Conor McCaughan of DMC Films and John Maclean worked on the concept and story in collaboration with Film4, before McCaughan introduced See-Saw Films’ Iain Canning and Emile Sherman to the project.

“SLOW WEST had been developed by Film4 initially through DMC,” explains Canning. “We had worked with Michael on SHAME and I think he had enjoyed the experience and felt that we would be a good fit to support John in his first feature. We read a relatively developed version of the script and fell in love with it. We were looking for bold stories told by interesting filmmakers and SLOW WEST definitely

falls into that category.

“It was a very easy decision to make as John had all of the traits we look for in a director: an individual vision, a track record of inspiring creative talent, and a story to tell.

“He’s also got a fantastic history with visual media from his time in The Beta Band and his projects since then. He’s a visual stylist and his short films were so distinctive. PITCH BLACK HEIST, which won a BAFTA Best Short Film award, was a fantastic storytelling feat in such a short space of time, taking the audience on such twists and turns. It was very obvious to see that his talent would flow through into feature films.”

See-Saw Films, as a UK and Australian company familiar with structuring international co-productions, set up SLOW WEST under the official UK-New Zealand co-production treaty to maximize the advantages of shooting on locations in Scotland and New Zealand.

See-Saw produced the internationally acclaimed Jane Campion TV series TOP OF THE LAKE on location in New Zealand. Canning explains why the team felt that New Zealand could stand in for the American West: “We were very aware of the options that the landscape there gave us. There’s incredible opportunity in New Zealand: you go one stretch of road and you’re in Scotland and you go on another stretch of road and you’re in Ireland then another and you’re in Devon in the UK. On the South Island we found vast expanses of uninhabited land with amazing texture that we could see as Colorado. It’s a very versatile landscape and you can also get the right season given that we were filming towards the end of the year, which is summer there.

“John just fell in love with New Zealand and through careful planning and a huge amount of work through the research phase of the film, we have been very careful to make sure that audiences will think that they’re very much in Colorado but the secret win for us is that it’s all been filmed in New Zealand.”

Producer Rachel Gardner, the New Zealander who came into the co-production as physical producer, says that the locations in SLOW WEST are not the expected spectacular vistas of South Island mountains and lakes, but instead the tussock plains, silver birch forests and riverbanks found in the McKenzie Country region.

“We are making it all look quite truthful to the Colorado setting of the story. New Zealand has world-class crew and a really high standard of actors and from the flow of productions coming through they’ve been very well trained in both creative and technical departments,” says Gardner.

Production designer Kim Sinclair, a New Zealander with an art direction Oscar® and BAFTA to his credit (for AVATAR, also filmed in New Zealand), says he was inspired by the script and its fresh, unexpected flavor to build the sets without resorting to the more usual brown horses, brown set and brown costumes feel of most Westerns. “We’re avoiding a too stereotypical look because structurally it’s an

existential European road movie, it's the journey of a young European man in the West.

"This script stood out as a really fascinating story and I immediately found it very interesting to visualize the design, because the characters were so strong they really jumped off the page. So it was pretty exciting to scout for the locations."

With very few sets in the film, Sinclair was able to design each one to reflect the mood of each stage of Jay's journey from the warm, cozy crofter's cottage in Scotland, through the black desolation of a burnt-out Native American village in the snow, to the bleached, skeleton-like silver timber of a trading post occupied by desperate people, and the fresh young pine of the Ross's new cottage with its whitewashed walls and blue-trimmed tablecloth representing hope in the new land.

For costume designer Kirsty Cameron, authenticity with a twist was the key to the costumes. Grounding it in the reality meant that because they were travellers, the only clothes the characters had were what they were wearing.

Cameron says, "John and I felt that the authenticity of the time was the most inspiring place for us to start from. There's so much fantastic documentation of the time showing things like the way the men wear their shirts, the way they layer their clothes - but we also wanted to give it its own flavor in terms of the color palette and working with the colors in the landscape. There's a juggling act that you play between the truth, the characters, the actor, the landscape, the story and the style of the film. After all, the film is mostly people in costumes, walking through a landscape, so what they wear is pretty important."

Jay's journey is reflected in the changes his costume goes through from his upper-class suit at the start to the disheveled, dirty outfit he ends his journey in. "Jay is a little bit of a babe in the woods, in his Scottish suit, which he throws away and replaces with the dead man's suit at the trading post. He also gets new Western boots, so his journey is one of becoming more at one with the world he's travelling across, though he is still an outsider.

"Similarly, Rose goes from being a Scottish girl, to becoming a girl that's working on the land with her father in America. She goes from wearing big, cumbersome peasant dresses to pants with a man's shirt. There's a kind of modernity - a freedom - in that, because going to America was about freedom and creating new lives."

For Fassbender's costume as Silas, Cameron opted for a plain look: "We've kept him intentionally quite simple, although at one point we thought it needed to be iconic, but I think Michael is iconic so we didn't need to do that with the costume."

Payne's body tattoos were designed as a result of collaboration between make-up designer Danelle Satherley, John Maclean and Maclean's father, a visual artist who collects Scrimshaw Art (engravings on bone originally done by whalers). Maclean's father sketched the initial line drawings, which were then degraded and aged by Satherley and her graphic artist, so that they looked as if they had been applied at different times by different methods. As Satherley says, "Payne's tattoos are a visual documentation of all the injuries he's sustained through his life."

The other important characters in a Western are the horses. Wrangler Wayne McCormack, with experience on Westerns in Canada and action films and TV series shot in New Zealand, was chosen to cast the horses.

“Silas and Jay’s horses are American quarter horses which originate from the States”, he says. “They’re bred to work cattle, they’re cow ponies. They’ve been used for hundreds of years in America for punching cattle and are now in modern-day rodeo and Western riding. They have a very placid way about them, which is ideal for film work.”

Fassbender didn’t have a lot of horse-riding experience: “First of all I was introduced to a horse called Awesome and I wasn’t so awesome on Awesome so they introduced me to Arnie who’s a lot more chilled and easier to ride. He makes up for my lack of riding skill. It’s been a lot of fun.”

An element that was very important to Maclean was the music. “Music was such a strong thing at the time in Scotland,” explains Maclean. “Contemporary Scottish music was very similar to blues and American and Gospel and we wanted to introduce Celtic and gospel tones into the music because Westerns usually are set close to Mexican border in terms of music. There is a mixture of original and composed music. For example, Passi Jo came up with a Congolese song that was inspired by traditional songs. I co-wrote a couple of songs and got involved with the soundtrack. I wanted to use music in the same way as a film like DELIVERANCE did. I was hoping if I put enough music in it, I wouldn’t have to put any music on it.”

ABOUT THE CAST

Kodi Smit-McPhee / Jay Cavendish

Kodi Smit-McPhee was seen at Sundance 2014 in Jake Paltrow’s film, THE YOUNG ONES, opposite Nicholas Hoult, Elle Fanning, and Michael Shannon. He starred opposite Andy Serkis, Jason Clarke, Gary Oldman, and Keri Russell in 20th Century Fox’s DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES. The project reunited him with director Matt Reeves, with whom he previously worked with on LET ME IN, opposite Chloë Grace Moretz. He recently filmed the epic miniseries GALLIPOLI for director Glendyn Ivin in the lead role.

In 2012, Kodi filmed THE CONGRESS, directed by Ari Folman, starring opposite Robin Wright, Paul Giamatti and Harvey Keitel. The film premiered in the Directors’ Fortnight at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival.

In addition, Kodi filmed the independent film THE WILDERNESS OF JAMES in the title role, opposite Isabel Furman, Virginia Madsen, and Evan Ross. He also starred in A BIRDER’S GUIDE TO EVERYTHING, opposite Ben Kingsley and Katie Chang, which premiered at the 2013 TriBeCa Film Festival. Kodi also played Benvolio in Romeo & Juliet, opposite Hailee Steinfeld, Douglas Booth, Ed Westwick, and Paul Giamatti.

Kodi starred in Laika Entertainment / Focus Features' **PARANORMAN**, in which he lends his voice as the lead role of Norman. The film was nominated for Best Animated Feature for the 2013 Academy Awards®, and also received a 2013 BAFTA Awards nomination for Best Animated Film. The cast included Anna Kendrick, Christopher Mintz-Plasse, Casey Affleck, Leslie Mann, and Jeff Garlin.

His earlier credits include starring in **LET ME IN**, opposite Chloë Grace Moretz and Richard Jenkins, for which he received a 2010 Critics Choice Nomination for Best Young Actor; **THE ROAD**, directed by John Hillcoat, opposite Viggo Mortenson, Charlize Theron and Robert Duvall, for which he received a 2009 Broadcast Critics Nomination for Best Young Actor and a 2010 Australian Film Institute (AFI) Nomination for Best International Actor; **ROMULUS, MY FATHER**, with director Richard Roxburgh and starring opposite Eric Bana and Franka Potente, garnered him the 2007 AFI Award for Best Young Actor as well as a Best Actor Nomination; the Australian film **MATCHING JACK**, for which he received a 2010 AFI Nomination for Best Supporting Actor and also **DEAD EUROPE** opposite Ewen Leslie and Marton Csokas, which premiered at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival.

Michael Fassbender / Silas Selleck

Michael Fassbender is an award-winning actor and producer.

In 2007 Fassbender made his breakthrough performance as Spartan Stelios in Frank Miller's **300**. He followed this with critically acclaimed performances in **FISH TANK**, **INGLORIOUS BASTERDS** and **HUNGER**, the latter of which earned him a British Independent Film Award.

Fassbender has seen critical and commercial success as Magneto in **X-MEN: FIRST CLASS** and **X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST**; as David in Ridley Scott's **PROMETHEUS**; and Carl Jung in **A DANGEROUS METHOD**.

In 2013, Fassbender was nominated for an Academy Award®, Golden Globe and BAFTA for Best Supporting Actor for his role as Edwin Epps in **12 YEARS A SLAVE**. This marked the third collaboration with director Steve McQueen, the first in 2008's **HUNGER** and the second in 2011's **SHAME**, a role that earned him Golden Globe and BAFTA nominations for Best Leading Actor.

Other film credits include **JANE EYRE**, **HAYWIRE**, **THE COUNSELOR** and **FRANK**.

Fassbender executive produced **SLOW WEST** as well as John Maclean's BAFTA-Winning short film **PITCH BLACK HEIST**, in which he also starred. He is developing a number of projects as a Producer for DMC.

Fassbender can next be seen in **MACBETH**.

Ben Mendelsohn / Payne

It was Ben Mendelsohn's AFI best actor award-winning portrayal of Andrew 'Pope' Cody in David Michod's Sundance Award-winning **ANIMAL KINGDOM** (2010) that

convinced SLOW WEST director/writer John Maclean to write the role of Payne for him.

Mendelsohn won the AFI best supporting actor award for his breakout role as a 17-year-old in the seminal Australian film THE YEAR MY VOICE BROKE (1987). Before that, his television roles included THE HENDERSON KIDS and NEIGHBOURS, both with Kylie Monogue. His other early films include THE BIG STEAL (1990) and SPOTSWOOD aka THE EFFICIENCY EXPERT (1992), in which he co-starred with Anthony Hopkins, COSI, IDIOT BOX, and MULLET. He was in the Martin Campbell-directed VERTICAL LIMIT (2000), which was filmed in New Zealand's South Island mountains, in the same region as SLOW WEST.

He was in the Terrence Malick-directed film THE NEW WORLD, appeared in Baz Luhrmann's AUSTRALIA and Alex Proyas' sci-fi drama KNOWING. He starred as Ned in the award-winning BEAUTIFUL KATE (2009) directed by Rachel Ward, for which he won the AFI best actor award. He was in the Joel Schumacher thriller TRESPASS, he played John Daggett in Christopher Nolan's THE DARK KNIGHT RISES. Other films include, Derek Cianfrance's drama THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES, Anne Fontaine's drama TWO MOTHERS, the Andrew Dominik-directed crime thriller KILLING THEM SOFTLY, with Brad Pitt.

His recent films include Ridley Scott's EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS with Christian Bale and Joel Edgerton, BLACK SEA directed by Kevin Macdonald, HOW TO CATCH A MONSTER, directed by Ryan Gosling and MISSISSIPPI GRIND with Ryan Reynolds and Sienna Miller.

In 2013, he guest-starred in the Lena Dunham TV series GIRLS, and his other TV series work includes THE SECRET LIFE OF US, LOVE MY WAY, TANGLE and AXE COP.

Caren Pistorius / Rose Ross

South African-born Caren Pistorius moved to New Zealand with her family at age 12. She discovered her passion for acting in a school drama class and later studied art and design before returning to local theatre. She is now making a career in Australia with recent roles in TV dramas OFFSPRING, playing Eloise Ward; REDFERN NOW (Janine Myles) and PAPER GIANTS: MAGAZINE WARS (Beth). Her New Zealand work includes the role of Chloe in Kirsten Marcon's feature THE MOST FUN YOU CAN HAVE DYING, the role of Rose in TV3 drama series THE BLUE ROSE and Luna in THE LEGEND OF THE SEEKER, produced in New Zealand by Ghost House Pictures for ABC Studios, US.

She has recently completed filming Derek Cianfrance's THE LIGHT BETWEEN OCEANS, also starring Michael Fassbender, Rachel Weisz, and Alicia Vikander.

Rory McCann / John Ross

Rory McCann was born in Glasgow, Scotland. His television credits are extensive and include COMING SOON, RANDALL & HOPKIRK DESCEASED, MONARCH OF THE GLEN, ROCKFACE, STATE OF PLAY, ST PETERSBURG – PETER IN PARADISE, the

title role in *ATTILA THE HUN*, *SURVIVORS* and the award-winning comedy drama series *SHAMELESS* for Channel 4. Rory also starred in Channel 4's comedy drama series *THE BOOK CLUB*, winning a Scottish BAFTA for his outstanding performance as Kenny, and more recently played Derek in the series *THE JURY*.

Rory's film work includes *SPOOK TIME*, *RATCATCHER*, *PASTY FACES*, *JACK AND JILL*, *BEOWULF*, and *HOT FUZZ*. He appeared in *YOUNG ADAM* with Ewan McGregor and Tilda Swinton, and *ALEXANDER* alongside Colin Farrell and Angelina Jolie. Other credits include *THE CREW*, *SOLOMON KANE*, *SEASON OF THE WITCH*, and *CLASH OF THE TITANS* alongside Liam Neeson and Ralph Fiennes.

Rory currently stars as Sandor Clegane in HBO's acclaimed series *GAME OF THRONES*, of which he has filmed four seasons, and recently filming *BANISHED* for BBC, written by Jimmy McGovern.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

John Maclean – Director/Writer

It was during his time as a founder member of The Beta Band, one of the most highly revered and respected bands of the last two decades, that John discovered his love for filmmaking. The creative brain behind many of their most iconic and groundbreaking music videos, he continued his impressive work as a promo director with his next band, The Aliens, before making his first dramatic work – *MAN ON A MOTORCYCLE* - starring Michael Fassbender in 2009. The film, shot entirely on his mobile phone, retains the ingenuity and distinct visual style of his promos with a blistering central performance by Fassbender at its core. It played at the London Film Festival to critical acclaim - Sight and Sound called it "a masterpiece." John's short film, *PITCH BLACK HEIST*, funded by Film4 and the UKFC and starring Michael Fassbender and Liam Cunningham, won the BAFTA for Best Short Film.

Iain Canning – Producer

Academy Award® winning producer Iain Canning founded See-Saw Films with Emile Sherman in 2008. See-Saw is a UK and Australian company specializing in international film and television. Recent productions include Jane Campion's Emmy Award® nominated 6-part television series *TOP OF THE LAKE* and the multi-Academy Award® winning *THE KING'S SPEECH*, directed by Tom Hooper, and starring Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush and Helena Bonham Carter. See-Saw followed *THE KING'S SPEECH* with Steve McQueen's award winning *SHAME*, starring Michael Fassbender and Carey Mulligan and John Curran's *TRACKS*, starring Mia Wasikowska and Adam Driver.

Prior to founding See-Saw, Canning executive-produced the award-winning films *HUNGER* and *CONTROL*. *HUNGER*, Steve McQueen's debut feature, which recreated the final weeks of Irish Republican Bobby Sands, won the Camera d'Or at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival and the BAFTA Carl Foreman Award. *CONTROL*, the story of Joy Division singer Ian Curtis, also earned a Special Mention Camera

d'Or at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival and won a BAFTA Carl Foreman Award the same year.

Emile Sherman – Producer

Academy Award® winning producer Emile Sherman founded See-Saw Films with Iain Canning in 2008. See-Saw is a UK and Australian company specializing in international film and television. Recent productions include Jane Campion's Emmy Award® nominated 6-part television series TOP OF THE LAKE and the multi-Academy Award® winning THE KING'S SPEECH, directed by Tom Hooper, and starring Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush and Helena Bonham Carter. See-Saw followed THE KING'S SPEECH with Steve McQueen's award winning Shame, starring Michael Fassbender and Carey Mulligan and John Curran's TRACKS, starring Mia Wasikowska and Adam Driver.

Through his previous company, Sherman Pictures, Sherman produced films including the Toronto International Film Festival FIPRESCI awarded film DISGRACE starring John Malkovich and award winning films \$9.99, CANDY starring Heath Ledger and Geoffrey Rush, and Phillip Noyce's RABBIT PROOF FENCE (as Executive Producer).

Conor McCaughan - Producer

Having qualified as a lawyer in Scotland, Conor moved to London in 1999 to work at ICM talent agency (now Independent) working with clients including Ian McKellen, Julie Walters, Alan Rickman and Paul Bettany.

In 2005 he left and set up Troika alongside two partners which over the course of the last 8 years has established itself as one of the UK's leading talent agencies, with Conor managing actors such as Ken Branagh and Michael Fassbender, as well as a host of other highly regarded actors and comedians.

In 2008 Conor executive produced the thriller EDEN LAKE and since then has been developing various projects as a producer in conjunction with his clients.

In 2010 he established DMC with Michael Fassbender and produced the BAFTA-winning short PITCH BLACK HEIST with John Maclean. SLOW WEST, John's feature is the first film to be made of a number of feature projects that DMC are developing.

Rachel Gardner - Producer

Rachel Gardner has produced and executive produced a wide range of film and television in New Zealand, from feature films and short films to documentaries, prime time television drama and scripted comedy.

She produced Sima Urale's award-winning feature film APRON STRINGS and Anthony McCarten's SHOW OF HANDS. Her many award-winning short films have been selected for multiple international festivals and include HONK IF YOU'RE HORNY, directed by Joe Lonie, BIRD, directors Jane Shearer and Steve Ayson, FOG, directed by Peter Salmon and TRUANT, directed by Michael Duignan.

Her major television projects include the award-winning and critically acclaimed dramas AGENT ANNA and THE CULT – both under offer for US re-makes - and satirical series THE PRETENDER.

Rachel Gardner ran Great Southern Television with business partner Philip Smith for a number of years, building it from a small factual production company into a multi-genre success story. In 2008, they won the New Zealand Screen Production Association (SPADA) Independent Producer of the Year Award.

SLOW WEST is her first project as an independent producer after leaving Great Southern.

Robbie Ryan - Director of Photography

Irish cinematographer Robbie Ryan's work includes much-nominated (Academy Award®, Golden Globe, BAFTA) PHILOMENA, directed by Stephen Frears and starring Judi Dench and Steve Coogan; THE ANGEL'S SHARE directed by Ken Loach; GINGER & ROSA, directed by Sally Potter and starring Elle Fanning and Aliee Englert; BRICK LANE, directed by Sarah Gavron and three features directed by regular collaborator Andrea Arnold: WUTHERING HEIGHTS, RED ROAD, and FISH TANK, the 2010 BAFTA Best Film winner, starring Michael Fassbender. Ryan also worked with Arnold on her 2005 Academy Award®-winning short film WASP. He regularly shoots short films and among his many credits in that field is SLOW WEST director John Maclean's BAFTA 2012 Best Short Film winner PITCH BLACK HEIST, starring Michael Fassbender.

Kim Sinclair - Production Designer

New Zealander Kim Sinclair has Academy Award® and BAFTA (2010) wins as supervising art director on James Cameron's AVATAR. His work on that film also won him the Art Director's Guild award in the same year. He was nominated for Art Directors Guild awards for his work on THE LAST SAMURAI, directed by Edward Zwick and starring Tom Cruise (2004) and THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN, directed by Steven Spielberg (2012). His other art director credits include LEGEND OF ZORRO and VERTICAL LIMIT, both directed by Martin Campbell and MAN OF STEEL, directed by Zack Snyder. He was production designer on New Zealand films UNDER THE MOUNTAIN, BLACK SHEEP, and HER MAJESTY, for which he won a New Zealand film award. He originally trained as an architect.

Kirsty Cameron - Costume Designer

Kirsty Cameron is an award-winning costume designer who also works as production designer. She won New Zealand Film Award costume design for WHALE RIDER, directed by Niki Caro, and for which Keisha Castle-Hughes was Academy-Award® nominated. She also won NZ best costume design for her work on PERFECT CREATURE, Glenn Standring's vampire feature starring Dougray Scott and Saffron Burrows. She designed costumes for director Tusi Tamasese's acclaimed THE ORATOR, which won best film at Venice Film Festival in 2011 and best film at the New Zealand Film Awards in 2012; the award-winning IN MY FATHER'S DEN, directed by Brad McGann and the award-winning RAIN, directed by Christine Jeffs. Her other feature films as costume designer include LOVE BIRDS, AFTER THE

WATERFALL, THE HOPES & DREAMS OF GAZZA SNELL, and THE STRENGTH OF WATER.

She was production designer on the acclaimed THE WEIGHT OF ELEPHANTS (Daniel Borgman) and THE PRICE OF MILK (Harry Sinclair).

Danelle Satherley - Makeup/Hair Designer

Danelle Satherley was make-up artist and hair stylist on Peter Jackson's THE HOBBIT: THE DESOLATION OF SMAUG and THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES and make-up artist on THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY. She was make-up designer and hair designer on Taika Waititi's box office hit BOY and on his new film WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS and Roseanne Liang's MY WEDDING AND OTHER SECRETS. Her television drama work includes AGENT ANNA, starring Robyn Malcolm, as well as the very popular OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE.

SEE-SAW FILMS

Academy Award®-winning producers Emile Sherman and Iain Canning founded See-Saw Films in 2008. See-Saw is a UK and Australian company specializing in international film and television. Recent productions include the multi-Academy Award®-winning THE KING'S SPEECH, directed by Tom Hooper, and starring Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush and Helena Bonham Carter. See-Saw followed THE KING'S SPEECH with Steve McQueen's award-winning SHAME, starring Michael Fassbender and Carey Mulligan. See-Saw's next project, TRACKS, directed by John Curran and starring Mia Wasikowska premiered in competition at the Venice Film Festival. See-Saw's first television series, Jane Campion's TOP OF THE LAKE, starring Elisabeth Moss and Holly Hunter recently received eight Emmy® nominations.

See-Saw recently completed production on LIFE, directed by Anton Corbijn and starring Robert Pattinson and Dane DeHaan and MACBETH, directed by Justin Kurzel and starring Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard.

DMC FILM

Formed in 2010, DMC Film is the production company of Michael Fassbender and Conor McCaughan. The company's first production was PITCH BLACK HEIST, with director John Maclean, which went on to win the BAFTA for Best Short Film in 2012. DMC continued to work with Maclean to develop and produce SLOW WEST, the company's first feature. Other projects include ASSASSIN'S CREED with Ubisoft and New Regency as well as GARAGISTAS with BBC Films with Film4.