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PRESENT

ITALIAN STUDIES

A film by Adam Leon
78 minutes

Official Selection

2021 Tribeca Film Festival – World Premiere

FINAL PRESS NOTES

Distributor Contact:

George Nicholis
Rebecca Fisher
Magnolia Pictures
(212) 924-6701 phone
publicity@magpictures.com

Press Contact National:

Lauren Schwartz
Full Picture
lschwartz@fullpic.com

49 west 27th street 7th floor new york, ny 10001
tel 212 924 6701 fax 212 924 6742
www.magpictures.com



SYNOPSIS

SHORT SYNOPSIS

After author Alina Reynolds (Academy Award®-nominee Vanessa Kirby) loses her memory, she finds herself adrift on the streets of New York City. She unexpectedly connects with a group of teenagers — in conversations both real and imagined — as she searches for a way home.

SYNOPSIS

A writer, Alina Reynolds (Vanessa Kirby), loses her memory and finds herself adrift in New York City — with almost no sense of time, place, the season — or her own identity. Alina's consciousness swings between imagined conversations, fragments of her own short stories — and the bustling city around her. She finds an anchor in a charismatic teenager (Simon Brickner), connecting with him and his free-spirited group of friends — as she makes her way through a disorienting but strangely beautiful cityscape. The story is also full of music — much of it performed and captured live — alongside an evocative score from Nicholas Britell that informs Alina's journey from start to finish.

LONG SYNOPSIS

From award-winning writer-director Adam Leon (*Gimme the Loot*, *Tramps*) comes a lyrical film about dislocation, connection and the elusive nature of identity.

While visiting New York City from her native London, writer Alina Reynolds (Academy Award®-nominee Vanessa Kirby) inexplicably loses her memory and suddenly becomes unmoored and adrift on the streets of Manhattan with no sense of time or place — or even her own name. As Alina's consciousness swings between imagined conversations, fragments of her own short stories and the bustling city around her, she finds an anchor in charismatic teenager Simon (Simon Brickner).

Drawn to the lost woman, sweet-natured Simon soon introduces Alina to his dynamic, free-spirited group of friends, and together they make their way through a disorienting cityscape full of dizzying life, beauty and music. Their elliptical journey gradually sets Alina on a path back toward home.

Featuring an evocative score from Academy Award®-nominated composer Nicholas Britell (*Moonlight*, *If Beale Street Could Talk*), ITALIAN STUDIES stars Academy Award®-nominee Vanessa Kirby (*Pieces of a Woman*), Simon Brickner, Annabel Hoffman, Annika Wahlsten, Chris Arias, Fred Hechinger, Ray Lipstein and Maya Hawke. The film is produced by Brad Becker-Parton, Joshua Astrachan, Jamund Washington, Andrea Roa and Jason Reif; Vanessa Kirby executive produces along with Michael Bloom, Maria Zuckerman, and Ryan Heller for Topic; Lia Buman and Tim Headington for Tango Entertainment, and Frederick W. Green for Animal Kingdom.



A Conversation with Adam Leon, Writer-Director, ITALIAN STUDIES

What were the origins of ITALIAN STUDIES?

I had known Vanessa Kirby for several years; we had become good friends. She got on the phone with me—I remember very specifically it was Feb. 2, 2018—and said she was going to be in New York periodically over the next year and could be available. She really pushed me to make something with her. And I was at this point where I was working on a couple of projects, but I was realizing it was unlikely I was going to shoot anything that year. So, I called my producers from *Tramps*, Joshua Astrachan, Andrea Roa and Brad Becker-Parton, and I was like, “Should we do this?” They said, “Yes. She’s amazing. Let’s figure something out.”

So, the movie started from an odd place that was very different from my other movies, where I had an idea and it stayed in my head for a while, then I put it on paper. This started with a let’s-make-a-movie concept, which was an incredible opportunity. It does not happen often that the star of the movie, the producers and the financiers say, “Go out and make something unique. Let’s do something that we haven’t seen before.” We had the most explicit encouragement to go for it in a big way, to take risks as artists. We had the most explicit permission to try things we’d always wanted to try.

How did the actual story begin to take shape?

Vanessa and I had been talking about concepts that we wanted to explore. We were both very interested in the idea of what it means to be present and how we connect with the environment around us. She also said, “I want you to throw me out into the streets of New York and to challenge me.” The other thing was that I had done this live show in the late months of 2017 called “The All-City Hour Variety Hour” that involved a lot of the teenagers that are in the movie. There was something special about working with them, but I didn’t want to do an alarmist project—you know, the kids are in trouble. And I didn’t want to do a “We-gotta-get-tickets-to-the-show-tonight” movie. That’s very much what *Gimme the Loot* is. There was something more mysterious and emotional that I was going for, but I couldn’t quite put my arms around it. So, I started to have regular meetings with the producers. I went through my idea drawer and then continued talking to Vanessa.

At what point did you hit upon the idea of this writer, Alina Reynolds, having this experience of bonding with teens on the streets of New York as she’s experiencing extreme memory loss?



Pretty quickly we honed in on the idea of a woman who loses her memory in New York and telling that story from her perspective, so that she's unreliable and unknowable—and in some ways, so is the movie's story. Something we talked about early on was we were going to shoot this movie a bit piecemeal, and we should make a movie that should be shot that way, where it would be advantageous to the story. This conceit made it beneficial to Alina's story to shoot in summer and in winter and mix it altogether.

Was there a lot of back and forth with Vanessa on the script then?

Yes, we were collaborating pretty intensely. We were not in person. She was in London, but we were talking regularly. She was really a part of not only creating the character but also the story and the world and the feeling of the movie. She challenged me a lot. Vanessa has everything that you would want from someone you're working with. Some of that is because of her experience, some of that is just because of who she is. She has this extreme passion for and dedication to the project, a willingness to be vulnerable and to take risks and to be open to ideas. Just an incredible screen presence and camera awareness, and she's so smart about story and character.

Did you research memory loss at all as you were writing?

We decided early on that we weren't going to give a lot of context on why Alina lost her memory, why she's gone down this rabbit hole, because she doesn't know. For Vanessa, in a way I really admire, she felt that she needed to know how this could happen. She did a lot of research, talked to a lot of psychiatrists. She did research on fugue states and temporary memory loss. She would relay some of that to me, and I felt like I did need that support to know that we weren't doing something totally out of bounds, but I was more concerned about telling the story of this character's experience. For me, this story isn't about the details of her state, it's about how she perceives and navigates the world around her in her state. The daydreaming, the dissociation — it feels important and right for the character that it be impressionistic because the story is from the perspective of someone who is processing in a dream state. It is a dream of a movie, I think of it as an Alice in Wonderland story.

Alice in Wonderland, of course, sees a young woman going down a rabbit hole of self-discovery and adventure even as she attempts to return home — although home for Alina means regaining her sense of self. How specifically did the Lewis Carroll fairy tale influence ITALIAN STUDIES?

We looked at the original story, and also, I adore the Disney animated film, which has such fantastic visual storytelling and direction. One of the elements that I love about the story is there's virtually no set up. She sees the white rabbit, she decides to follow it. With ITALIAN STUDIES, we wanted the New York City section to follow that same concept—she walks her dog, she goes



into a hardware store, it sets her off in a mysterious way, and she falls into this spell. There's a great tradition of, for lack of a better term, "hit on the head" movies — *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Spirited Away*, along with silly comedies and more experimental or intense films. This "hit on the head" concept can be used to explore deeper themes.

What themes did that concept allow you to explore here?

For ITALIAN STUDIES, I think there are two major themes that Alina's "spell" allows us to explore. The first is self-identity. We have a character who literally does not have an identity interacting with teenagers who are at a moment in life where they are searching in a broader sense for who they are. In London, she's this cosmopolitan bohemian, gregarious, socially adept and very self-aware person. In New York, she's lost and grasping at straws, putting up defenses because she doesn't want to be found out. It's only in the interview space — which I feel is in her own creative mind — where she is completely open and can really be herself, which, of course, helps her connect to the teens in a deeper way than in "real" life.

That concept of connection is the other idea we're exploring. How do we connect with each other, our environment and ourselves? Having a character who is under a spell provides a blank slate. She is seeing the world completely fresh, with new eyes. The few connections she is able to make and, importantly, the disconnection she feels from others and herself, are created completely in the present moment of the movie because that's all she has to lean on.

So in a thematic sense, ITALIAN STUDIES is about the search for identity and connection. Alina is literally looking for an identity and grabs onto what she can from the world around her — and in doing so, she conflates her own stories and emotions with the real environment. Which I think is true for all of us in a sense — we form our identities based on what surrounds us and how we want to be seen.

How did you cast the teenagers Alina meets and who we see interviewed in the film?

There were the ones I knew from the variety show, and then Fred Hechinger — who plays Matt and is a co-producer on the movie — he introduced us to some other teens that he knew. Then we brought on these incredible casting directors, Geraldine Baron and Salome Oggenfuss. They immediately tapped into the feeling we were going for with the movie. I'm sure when Geraldine and Salome were teenagers they were very much ITALIAN STUDIES kids, cool for sure but also so open and genuine. They were really struck by us not wanting to cast the jaded teens putting on faux badass airs and instead going for people who were honest and reflective. So, between all of that, we built a group that we really liked. We did a lot of rehearsal with them. Rehearsal was mostly hanging out, asking questions, very similar to the interview segments in the movie, seeing who vibed with each other and trying to create the right chemistry.



In the case of Simon Brickner, who plays Simon, we knew him from Fred and the variety show. He can be so electric, and he was just so good on camera and such a good actor. His interview went to a lot of places that aren't in the movie — it got really intense. There was just something there that felt like he would connect with Vanessa's character, and she would connect with him.

How would you describe the rapport that Alina and Simon share? What is their point of connection?

Her way "home" begins through her connection with Simon — a relationship that is deeply meaningful in different ways for them both. I think for her there is this warmth and tenderness and openness that he has. When she meets him, she needs that warmth and that tenderness. That openness—because of the state she's in and just who she is—is something that feels remarkable to her. He feels like an open book. For him, she feels different. He picks up pretty quickly that there's something broken about this woman, and that draws him to her.

How did you come to cast Maya Hawke in the film?

Maya is very close with Fred and she came to see him in a couple of performances of our live variety show, The All City Hour Variety Hour, and asked if she could be a part of it. I had seen her act before and she's phenomenal, so we first collaborated on one of the variety shows.

Then, when we were building ITALIAN STUDIES, we all wanted to figure out a way to get her involved. We had this idea of making her the person in Alina's story world and having her wear the same wardrobe, since Alina is conflating the characters in her story with her own reality. It was a blast working with her, Maya has that rare combination of talent and dedication with a real sense of adventure and play in her.

What does Alina's profession as a writer mean for her identity and how are you, as a writer, connected to this film?

I was so much like these teenagers when I was growing up in New York City. A lot of them would have been my people and remind me of myself and my friends back then. And of course, I'm a writer who has told stories about young people, which is true for Alina. I can identify with being a bit freaked out, confused, but also enchanted by all the strange sounds and pretty colors in the city.

You have a history of working with non-professional actors. What was it like to have a cast that included both gifted but inexperienced teenagers and an Oscar-nominated actress in Vanessa Kirby?



Everyone's different, everyone's process is different. When it comes to the actors, it's about trying to be very open with what questions they have, no matter if they're professional or non-professional. I don't find that to be the delineation line so much in terms of working with the performers. Some people need to be encouraged, some people want to be pushed and challenged. That's true for someone like Vanessa and for a teen that has never acted before. It's also about creating an environment that feels comfortable.

How did you find the experience of working with cinematographer Brett Jutkiewicz (Ready or Not, Daddy Longlegs)? What were some of the reference points that you looked to when creating the visual language for ITALIAN STUDIES?

We had a picture of Kate Bush on the production wall, and we sent everybody a copy of Milos Forman's *Taking Off*—those were our spiritual fathers and mothers. Visually, we talked about *Cold Water*, the Olivier Assayas movie, and *Chungking Express*. We talked a lot about Hong Sangsoo movies and how he deals with time-space logic and coincidence; *The Day He Arrives* particularly felt relevant. We looked at this movie *Money Talks* that was directed by Alan Funt for the interviews. We looked at music videos. Gus Van Sant did the Red Hot Chili Peppers "Under the Bridge" video—there were some shots that related to how we were shooting the city. Brett and I also looked at Saul Leiter as a pretty big inspiration in terms of the color and image quality. We wanted to embrace color and saturation. Movies are so washed out now, and we wanted this to pop and feel juicy and alive.

It's interesting that you'd mention Kate Bush given that music plays such an important role in ITALIAN STUDIES. The band Let's Eat Grandma is featured in the film, along with singer-songwriter Annabel Hoffman, who plays Lucinda.

Kate Bush was a huge influence. Vanessa would listen to "Hounds of Love" to get into the emotional rawness of the character. We were also really focused on New Zealand singer-songwriter Aldous Harding in terms of her approach to art, how free and open she is while at the same time having a real professionalism about her craft. We talked a lot about the idea that this movie should be its own vibration, and Aldous and Kate are artists who are very much on their own vibration. There was discussion in the edit about Brian Eno's writings on ambient music—the idea of having many levels of listening attention without enforcing one in particular.

You had a unique shooting schedule for the film. To what degree did you allow space for improvisation or exploration on set?

It was a unique shooting schedule. We shot three days, July 4-6, 2018. We edited for a few weeks. Then we shot for six days in August, including the interviews. We assembled what we had, and then we went back into the writing lab. We shot 12 days in February 2019, and we shot the beginning of May, late April in London for three days. This movie was talking to itself a lot.



Everything we shot would then influence the next piece we shot. We carved out a good amount of time for exploring during production — those scenes where Alina's lost in the city by herself, we set aside the first three days to just do that. The idea was the city would be alive and we'd find the character, that that would almost be our rehearsal process. So, it's very structured but within that structure, there is purposefully a lot of freedom.

You have such a distinct lens through which you present New York. Does that come from your experiences having grown up in the city and living there all your life, knowing it so intimately?

I don't think of myself as just a New York-filmmaker—I like to think I'm good at capturing environments no matter where they are. But who am I kidding, right? I've made three features here. I feel so comfortable here that maybe that allows me to just wander and observe and tune out the noise of the city. We shot a lot of ITALIAN STUDIES in Chelsea, and I had just moved to Chelsea, so didn't know this neighborhood *that* well. So, before we started shooting, I wanted to walk the streets and look and observe. I had to look at it with fresh eyes. We take so much for granted in the city that it was exciting and bizarre to leave my house and pretend I'm Alina and see the city that way. The city is wild—*Delirious New York*, right? There's a lot of truth to that Rem Koolhaas idea that New York is the entire world all put together in one place. And Alina actually is delirious in New York.

You're once again working with Oscar-nominated composer Nicholas Britell on the score for ITALIAN STUDIES after having collaborated with him on both Gimme the Loot and Tramps.

This movie has more score than anything I've done by far. I've been somewhat averse to original score, but it felt that that was the way to go here to create a soundscape that would feel more immersive. We wanted to do something that was at its core warm because the core of this movie is warm. At the same time, there is such a sense of uncertainty and danger throughout, we needed to capture that. We talked about how the whole movie needed to feel structured through its music, and that the score was essentially a suite. We needed themes to call back and change, and even when there wasn't music, the music was handing off to sound design. It is a movie that we listened to without visuals a lot, and it needed to work on those terms. We worked on certain themes and where they would go, then played with that set of five or six themes, augmented them, combined them—they all come together near the end of the film during the party sequence, which is the emotional climax of the movie.

ITALIAN STUDIES was shot before the pandemic. Watching it now, it feels like such a beautiful time capsule of pre-COVID New York.

Two weeks into COVID, I said to Brad Becker-Parton, our producer, "This is a period piece now. We made a period piece." I think there's something interesting about watching this movie now that



wouldn't have been quite the same before COVID. I will say, we realized early on that we only could control what we could control on this film, and we embraced that. There are so many different factors that go into one's experience when they view art, and that's cool. Our job was to

tell a great story and to know every element of that story and to tell it through great characters and great performances. How people interpret it, how people experience it, what people think about it? That's all beautiful, and it's all going to be different.

What are you most proud of having achieved artistically with this movie?

I think this is my most personal movie. I feel I've been the most expressive and the most creative on this project, and it is artistically the strongest movie that I've made by far. I'm very proud of it, and I'm proud of the work that was done by so many people. This movie has been surrounded by world-class talent—we got Oscars, BAFTAs, Peabodys all up in these credits— fancy stuff. But it is a movie that is experimental in some ways. It was not made on a huge budget. And to have so many people who are absurdly talented and successful pour themselves into it, along with all these young first-timers taking a leap of faith, has been remarkable and just thrilling. Honestly, I love doing this job more than anything in the world. If I were to rank the 50 best days of my life, 23 of them are the 23 production days on this movie. It was such a special experience to be around these people.



ABOUT THE TEAM

Adam Leon, Director / Screenwriter

Adam Leon was born and raised in NYC. His feature debut, GIMME THE LOOT, won the Grand Jury Prize at SXSW, was an official selection of the Cannes Film Festival, and was released theatrically around the world.

His follow-up, TRAMPS, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2016 where it was acquired by Netflix. His latest feature, ITALIAN STUDIES, stars Vanessa Kirby and will premiere at the 2021 Tribeca Film Festival.

Leon is a winner of the Independent Spirit "Someone To Watch" award and a Gotham Award nominee for "Breakthrough Director."

Vanessa Kirby, "Alina" / Executive Producer

Academy Award nominated actress Vanessa Kirby can currently be seen starring in Kornél Mundruczó's PIECES OF A WOMAN alongside Ellen Burstyn. For her portrayal of Martha, Kirby's critically acclaimed performance garnered her Academy Award, Golden Globe, BAFTA, Critics Choice and SAG Award nominations. The film premiered at the 2020 Venice Film Festival in the main competition at which Kirby received the Volpi Cup for Best Actress. The film also screened at the 2020 Toronto International Film Festival. Following its Venice Film Festival premiere, the film was sold to Netflix and released digitally on January 7, 2021.

Kirby is currently in production on the next installment of the MISSION IMPOSSIBLE franchise, which is slated for release on May 27, 2022.

Most recently, Kirby starred in THE WORLD TO COME, an independent film which tells the story of two women who forge a close connection despite their isolation in the mid- 19th century American frontier. Directed by Mona Fastvold, Kirby is joined by Katherine Waterston. Following its screening at the 2020 Venice Film Festival in the main competition, the film was sold to Bleeker Street and was released on February 12, 2021.



In August 2019, Kirby starred in *FAST AND FURIOUS PRESENTS: HOBBS AND SHAW*, a spin-off from the *Fast and Furious* franchise. Kirby played Hattie Shaw, an MI6 agent and the sister to Jason Statham's mercenary character, Deckard Shaw. The cast also included Dwayne Johnson, Idris Elba and Helen Mirren. The film generated over \$730 million at the box office.

From June to September in 2018, Kirby played the titular role in Carrie Cracknell's *JULIE* at London's National Theatre. A Polly Stenham adaptation of the classic play *Miss Julie*, Kirby received rave reviews for her performance.

That year, Kirby also starred in *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: FALLOUT* alongside Tom Cruise, Henry Cavill and Rebecca Ferguson. The film was released on July 27 and was the sixth instalment of the film franchise was a global box office hit, pulling in over \$735 million globally, to date.

In 2016 and 2017, Kirby starred as Princess Margaret in Netflix's award-winning series, *THE CROWN*. Kirby starred alongside Claire Foy and Matt Smith. The first series explores the story of the British Royal family from 1947 to 1955 and Princess Margaret's ill-fated engagement to Peter Townsend. The second series, set in the 1960's, examines Princess Margaret's relationship and marriage with photographer Antony Armstrong-Jones (Lord Snowdon). Kirby's performance as Princess Margaret earned her a Supporting Actress nomination at the British Academy Television Awards 2017, and again in 2018, where she won. Kirby was also nominated in the Supporting Actress Category at the Primetime Emmy Awards 2018.

In February 2016, Kirby played Yelena in *UNCLE VANYA* at The Almeida Theatre alongside Jessica Brown Findlay, Tobias Menzies, Paul Rhys, Richard Lumsden, Hilton McRae and Ann Queensberry. She then reprised her role as Stella in *A STREET CAR NAMED DESIRE* alongside Gillian Anderson and Ben Foster on Broadway.

In 2016, Kirby appeared as the lead role in science-fiction film *KILL COMMAND* and she also starred alongside Emilia Clarke, Sam Claflin and Charles Dance in Thea Sharrock's *ME BEFORE YOU*.

In early 2015 Kirby starred in the Wachowski sibling's *JUPITER ASCENDING* alongside Mila Kunis, Channing Tatum and Eddie Redmayne, and *BONE IN THROAT*, which premiered at SXSW in March and also stars Ed Westwick, Tom Wilkinson and Neil Maskell. The film is based on Anthony Bourdain's novel of the same name.



In late 2015, Kirby starred in BBC2's highly anticipated one-off drama, *THE DRESSER*, alongside Anthony Hopkins and Sir Ian McKellen. The two-hour drama was based on the play of the same name by

Ronald Harwood and directed by Richard Eyre. Kirby also appeared opposite Sean Bean in ITV's *THE FRANKENSTEIN CHRONICLES*, which tells the story of a fearless detective on the hunt for a crazed killer through the dark recesses of Regency London.

In 2014 Kirby won the Best Supporting Actress award at the WhatsOnStage awards for her performance alongside Gillian Anderson and Ben Foster, as Stella in *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* at The Young Vic.

In 2014, she also starred in *QUEEN AND COUNTRY* - the hilarious follow-up to John Boorman's *HOPE AND GLORY* starring Callum Turner and David Thewlis. In 2013, Kirby appeared in Richard Curtis' *ABOUT TIME* alongside Domhnall Gleeson, Rachel McAdams and Bill Nighy.

In 2012, she played the lead role of Alice in Ridley Scott's mini-series adaptation of Kate Mosse's novel *LABYRINTH*, and then starred in *CHARLIE COUNTRYMAN* alongside Shia LeBeouf, Evan Rachel Wood and Mads Mikkelsen. Later that year, Kirby appeared in *THREE SISTERS* at the Young Vic, earning rave reviews.

On stage, Kirby began her career appearing in the National Theatre's *WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN* and the West Yorkshire Playhouse's *AS YOU LIKE IT*. In 2011 her role in *THE ACID TEST* at the Royal Court Theatre received critical acclaim. Kirby started her theatrical career in a series of hugely successful theatre roles for director David Thacker. She first appeared as Ann in Arthur Miller's *ALL MY SONS* for which she received the BIZA Rising Star Award at the Manchester followed by Henrik Ibsen's *GHOSTS*.

Kirby made her TV debut shortly after in the BBC series *THE HOUR* alongside Ben Whishaw and Dominic West. She then went on to play Estella in the BBC's adaption of *GREAT EXPECTATIONS* alongside Ray Winstone, Gillian Anderson and Douglas Booth.

Kirby is a Global Ambassador for WAR CHILD, a charity which supports children from across the world who are affected by war and conflict. www.warchild.org.uk



Nicholas Britell, Composer

Twice Academy Award nominated and EMMY winning composer and pianist Nicholas Britell is known for his critically acclaimed scores, including those for Barry Jenkins' 2018 *If Beale Street Could Talk* and Jenkins' 2017 Academy Award Best Picture winner *Moonlight*. Britell received Academy Award nominations for both those films as well as BAFTA and Critics Choice nominations for *If Beale Street Could Talk*. He received Golden Globe and Critics Choice nominations as well as the 2016 Hollywood Music in Media Award for Best Original Score (Dramatic Feature) for *Moonlight*. The year prior, he wrote the score for Adam McKay's *The Big Short*, which marked the start of his collaboration with the Academy Award winning writer- director-producer. In 2018, he wrote the score for McKay's *Vice*, starring Christian Bale and Amy Adams. Britell's most recent film work is the score for Netflix's *The King*, starring Timothée Chalamet. For television, Britell scores HBO's *Succession*, for which he won the 2019 EMMY for Outstanding Original Main Title Theme Music and the Hollywood Music in Media Award for Best Original Score.

In 2019, Britell was honored by the World Soundtrack Awards with the Film Composer of the Year Award for his scores for *If Beale Street Could Talk* and *Vice*. In 2020, the World Soundtrack Awards honored Britell for a second year running, this time with the TV Composer of the Year Award for *Succession*.

Britell is a Steinway Artist and is also a Creative Associate of the Juilliard School. In December 2018, it was announced that Britell will be part of Esa-Pekka Salonen's newly formed creative collective "brain trust" as Salonen takes the reins as music director of the San Francisco Symphony. His recent public performances have included concerts at London's Barbican Hall, the Million Dollar Theatre in Los Angeles, Chicago's Ravinia, and Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall.

Britell's upcoming projects include Barry Jenkins' *The Underground Railroad* series for Amazon, Disney's *Cruella* starring Emma Stone as well as Jenkins' *The Lion King* for Disney, HBO's *Succession*'s Season 3 and Adam McKay's *Don't Look Up* for Netflix.

Brett Jutkiewicz, Director of Photography

Brett discovered filmmaking by commandeering his father's Hi8 camcorder to make skate videos and short films as a teenager growing up in Long Island, New York. He studied film at Boston University and met several young directors including Josh and Benny Safdie, whose debut features *The Pleasure of Being Robbed* (Cannes '08) and



Daddy Longlegs (Sundance '10) Brett photographed shortly after moving to New York City. Since then, Brett has continued to shoot award-winning feature films as well as commercials, music videos, and television shows. The Civil War-set *Men Go To Battle* earned Brett a spot in the New Yorker's Top 5 Cinematography of 2016 and his recent films include the Fox Searchlight thriller *Ready or Not* (2019), Eddie Huang's directorial debut *Boogie* (2021) for Focus Features, and *Scream* (2022) for Paramount Pictures. Brett continues to live and work in New York City and wherever the camera takes him.

About Animal Kingdom

Founded in 2012, Animal Kingdom has been responsible for some of the most distinctive and acclaimed American independent cinema of the past near-decade, including: "Short Term 12," "It Follows," "Paterson," "It Comes at Night," "Tramps," "Beach Rats," and "The Dead Don't Die." The Brooklyn-based company's mission is to elevate singular voices, challenge convention and to make vivid, beautiful and original work.

About Tango Entertainment

Tango Entertainment was formed in 2017 by Lia Buman and Tim Headington with the mission to be a story-driven producer and financier. Since then, Tango has produced and financed a wide variety of films including Nia DaCosta's *Little Woods* (Neon), *Blow the Man Down* (Amazon) from Bridget Savage Cole and Danielle Krudy and Eliza Hitman's *Never Rarely Sometimes Always* (Focus). Earlier in 2021 – Tango's *Little Fish*, directed by Chad Hartigan was released by IFC in Feb and *Together Together* directed by Nikole Beckwith with Ed Helms and Patti Harrison starring was released by Bleeker in April. Tango is currently producing *Spaceman*, directed by Johan Renck and starring Adam Sandler for Netflix. Tango is also financing and producing several independent films for release in 2022 as well as developing both film and tv projects.

About Topic Studios

Topic Studios, the award-winning entertainment studio from First Look Media, develops, finances and produces provocative and entertaining content for all platforms including theatrical, streaming, television and podcasts.

From Kevin Macdonald's legal thriller *The Mauritanian*, starring Jodie Foster who won a Golden Globe® for her performance, Tahar Rahim nominated for a Golden Globe® for his role, Benedict Cumberbatch and Shailene Woodley (STXfilms), and the Academy Award® winning *Spotlight*; to documentaries *The Fight*, co-released with Magnolia



Pictures and *Mucho Mucho Amor* on Netflix; to television with the Film Independent Spirit Award® nominated docu-series *Love Fraud* and the Emmy Award® winning and Peabody Award® nominated *16 Shots*, both on Showtime; and the upcoming surfing documentary series, *100 Foot Wave* on HBO/HBO Max; as well as pioneering podcasts (the return of *Politically Re-Active* with W. Kamau Bell and Hari Kondabolu on Warner Media Podcast Network; the IDA Award® winning investigative podcast, *Somebody*, with iHeartMedia); and *The Messenger*, on Audible Plus.

Recent films from Topic Studios include Steven Soderbergh's dark comedy *The Laundromat* (Netflix) starring Meryl Streep, Gary Oldman and Antonio Banderas; Julius Onah's psychological thriller *Luce* (co-released with Neon) starring Kelvin Harrison Jr., Naomi Watts and Octavia Spencer (nominated for three Independent Spirit Awards); Debra Granik's universally acclaimed drama *Leave No Trace* (Bleecker Street); and Michael Angelo Covino's Cannes-winning buddy comedy *The Climb* (Sony Pictures Classics).

Upcoming film projects from Topic Studios include Pablo Larraín's *Spencer* starring Kristen Stewart as Princess Diana (co-releasing with NEON); *Dream Horse* (co-releasing with Bleecker Street this May), starring Toni Collette and Damian Lewis and directed by Euros Lyn; Adam Leon's *Italian Studies* starring Academy Award® nominee Vanessa Kirby; *The Nowhere Inn* (IFC Films), a musical meta comedy written, produced by and starring St. Vincent and Carrie Brownstein; and Nikyatu Jusu's NYC-set psychological horror film *Nanny*. Films in development at Topic Studios include a story about the influence of Chinatown restaurants on California Punk produced by and starring Awkwafina; and Toni Collette's directorial debut *Writers & Lovers* adapted from Lily King's bestselling novel.

Topic Studios is also ramping up its scripted television division, having set up two premium dramas arising from their previous first-look deal with Tracy Oliver (*Girls Trip*), including the adult thriller *Savannah* with PKM Productions for Amazon Studios; and is developing an English-language adaptation of the critically acclaimed Israeli HOT comedy, *Nehama*, among other projects.



CREDITS

DIRECTOR

Adam Leon

PRODUCER

Brad Becker-Parton

Joshua Astrachan

Jamund Washington

Andrea Roa

Jason Reif

SCREENWRITER

Adam Leon

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Brett Jutkiewicz

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Vanessa Kirby

Lia Buman

Tim Headington

Ryan Heller

Michael Bloom

Maria Zuckerman

Frederick W. Green

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Claire Edelman

Ana Leocha

Max Silva

Talia Cohen

CO-PRODUCER

Gabby Green

Fred Hechinger



DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Brett Jutkiewicz

COMPOSER

Nicholas Britell

EDITOR

Sara Shaw

Erin DeWitt

Betsy Kagen

Kristan Sprague

CAST

Vanessa Kirby

Simon Brickner

Annika Wahlsten

Annabel Hoffman

Maya Hawke