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Kiss of life

Kiss of life
Kiss of life

Kiss of life



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OFFICIAL SELECTION
UN CERTAIN REGARD
FESTIVAL DE CANNES



~~happy~~



helen



john



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Kiss of life

direct.

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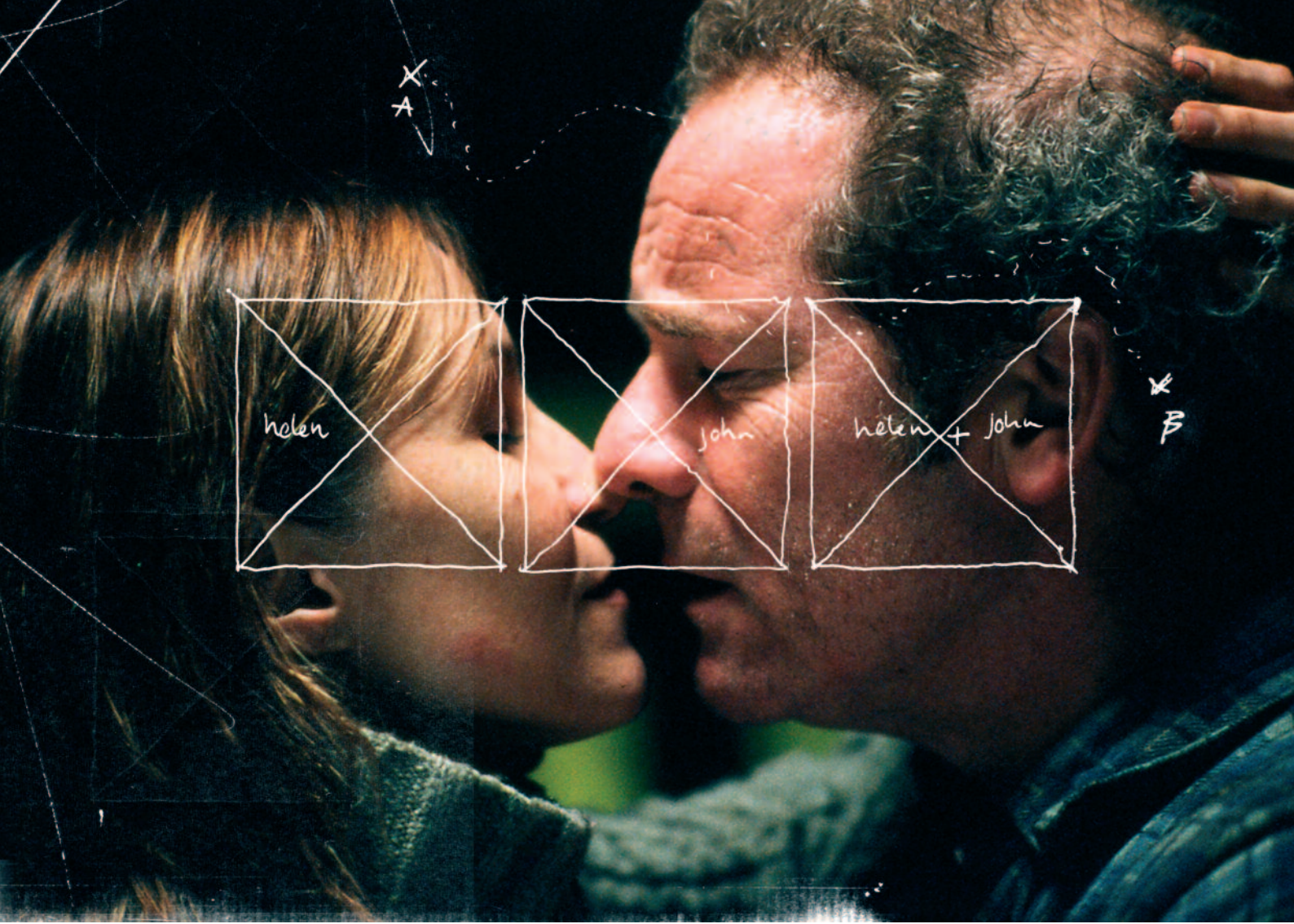


kiss of life.

a film by emily young

uk





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world sales

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title of the movie



international press

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In Cannes

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a **baker street media finance take five** production
a **wild horses films** and **haut et court** co-production
in association with **autonomous**

*actors
cast*

peter mullan -- ingborga dapkunaite



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kiss of life

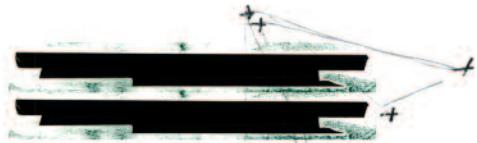
title of the movie

a film by **emily young**

director

4.

UK / France - Color - 35mm - 1.85
Running Time : 1H26 min - Dolby SRD



synopsis

Helen lives in London with her father and her kids.

John, her husband, is an aid-worker in Eastern Europe. He has been gone many-months.

Helen is desperately anxious that he should come home.

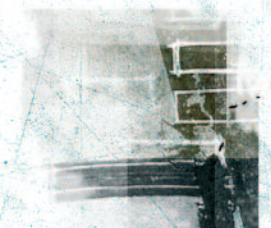
Taking the kids to school one morning, she is killed in a car accident.

She remains caught in limbo, trapped between life and death.

Many miles away, in war-torn Eastern Europe, John is unaware that his wife has died.

As Helen herself is unaware that she is dead...

Thus begins, a three-day Odyssey: Grandpa and the kids must come to terms with Helen's death ; John must travel across a war-torn land as he tries to reach home ; and Helen must stand helplessly observing her own existence as it comes back to haunt her - until at last she is reconciled with John, and thus released.

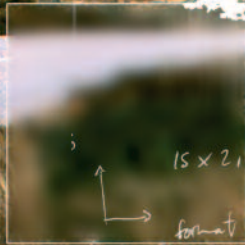




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✓

basnie

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~~2009~~

three

young family ym



Emily Young
Young
Director



e y

The story :

I wanted to explore the moment, the moments after dying. I was curious about how it might feel to be dead, as well as wanting to describe how it feels for the family left behind even how it brings all the family together (the dead as well as living) in a period of limbo immediately following a death. I am interested in the notion of time that exists inbetween moments. I have since read the 'Tibetan Book of the Dead', which suggested a structure for this idea. I also read a poem, 'Helen in Egypt', by a modernist poet called Hilda Doolittle, which follows Helen (of Troy fame) at the moment of her death. She is led into what is called the Amen Temple, a place outside of time, in order to solve the riddle of her life before she can leave it and die in peace. I thought that was fascinating - the idea of what might happen to us if we die at a moment when there are unresolved questions from our lives.

In the film, John's journey is very like Helen's. Frame, motion, and body-language are designed to bring husband and wife together within the scope of the film's narrative. Her experiences in limbo are parallel to his as he travels across a devastated landscape of mountains and plains, a desert of frightened families and winding roads shattered by war. Helen traverses a similar world, only in dream. Also, the landscapes that John passes through function as a reflection of his inner state. The phantom shapes of war he glimpses through the windows of his car are like ghosts drifting through the afterworld.

It was important that the dimensions of limbo should be expressed in terms of space. Helen's life goes into countdown when she is hit by a car, ending in a final back-track as she departs from her family and vanishes into rain. In the immediate aftermath of the crash, when she is in her own home, she does not know what has happened : familiar landmarks fail her, she is alone. and at a loss. But when her daughter and husband are there, suddenly Helen is able to accomplish the unfinished business of her life.

four

In limbo, space seems compressed and confined and sound, denser and closer. Gesture loses its meaning, things unfurl more slowly and have more impact on protagonists' feelings. The camera moves more deliberately too because we are in a state where a single word or gesture can change things forever : this is Helen's last chance, before she leaves for good.

There is also a sense of nostalgia, an image of time passing in Grandpa's Super 8 films. Shot in the woods, these function rather like limbo does : slices of life are condensed and intensified. And similarly, when Telly dreams that his mother is at his side comforting him just as Helen is experiencing the same moment in limbo, dreams are shown to be a fully-fledged experience. In other words, if Telly believes that his mother is nearby, then she really is nearby. In this way, limbo is shown to be a place where things exist as we should like them to exist.

The camera acts as the eye of death - the family is trapped within its frame. Every family member comes perilously close to death and must do whatever they can to hold on to life, to remain anchored for the future. In the film, timeframes are disrupted : past, present and future fuse into a single dimension and it takes days for the natural order to be restored.





femur

helen

london



John

palmie

homme

K

seven



I saw Peter Mullan in "My Name is Joe" and was struck by his power and truth and energy as an actor. We sent him the script and then he and I met for a drink. From that moment on I couldn't think of anyone else in the role, and so that was that. I knew he would bring a breadth to the character beyond anything I could conceive on my own. As well as being a brilliant actor (and director) he is a lovely man. In Croatia we were only with Peter and lots of Croatian actors. He was brilliant. He wanted to go the distance with us. We shot as much as we could in chronological order to create as real a sense as possible for Peter of John's actual journey.

When Katrin Cartlidge (originally cast as Helen) died so soon before the shoot, it was difficult to know where to turn to find anyone who could come close to her ability, presence or spirit. I met many actresses in a very short space of time and each of them would have made a different film. In fact it was Peter who put it to me that Katrin had a uniquely unplaceable quality and didn't seem particularly English. I had seen 'Burnt by the Sun' and been quite bowled over by Ingeborga Dapkunaite's performance. When I found out she had been living in London for 10 years, I got in touch with her and we met. She has an intensity and directness that struck me, and also that elusive quality I was looking for.

I tried to create an environment where the actors had space to do their 'thing'. I tried to guide them. Each actor has a different way of finding his or her way to the heart of each scene. I try and help them to that point, even if they're unaware of exactly what that might mean to me. They were all very dedicated and focussed and brought to the roles qualities that I couldn't anticipate. Having said that, very little actually changed in the shooting.

Cast
the cast.
cast
cast

family
family



ofit



nine



10
calling
colors.

28. EXT. / W.D.T. / R.W.G.

ten



The aim was to create a timeless feel. We talked through how the two worlds of the film could be married. John's journey and life in the house we wanted to keep quite monochrome and neutral, a backdrop to limbo as well as to hectic family life. "Winterreise" a book of photographs by Luc Delahaye of a journey across Russia, was a reference. Also, it was important to shoot in the autumn, a time of melancholy when everything dies in order to be reborn. I used Halloween and All Saints' Day (which is the scene in the Croatian cemetery with the candles) as a backdrop because they are, in cultural terms, the season in which we commune with the dead.

There is an ongoing dialogue between Wojciech Szepel, the DP and myself. We made a few shorts together while we were at film school and we push each other in terms of ideas and approach. We spend a lot of time talking and planning ; most decisions are made before getting onto set each day. In film school in Lodz we always shot on 35mm. Film stock was very limited and so there was none to waste, which was infuriating and yet an excellent discipline.

I had few specific references whilst making the film, but, I do very much like the Japanese film, "After Life" and the way it treats as absolutely real and tangible the experience after death, complete with steaming mugs of tea in cold rooms. But that film is set on the other side of life, and this one is set on the cusp between states.

Frame
Atmosphere

atmosphere

elevator

gingeborga dapkunaite [Helen)

I play Helen, who, at the beginning of the film, is getting through a fairly normal morning, doing the things she does every day of her life, like getting the kids ready for school, dealing with her husband being away, and looking after her father. It is a slightly messy life, but nevertheless, it is the life she is surrounded with and she lives it that morning without evaluating it greatly. When she dies however, Helen has the chance to experience the people closest to her again, and assess her relationships with them. Then the most everyday and seemingly trivial things in her life, like making toast for her son, or brushing her daughter's hair, suddenly become very precious. I liked Emily instantly. Working with her on this film was a unique experience. She is absolutely clear and determined about the story she wants to tell. The way we work on the set reflects that confidence, and I feel safe that I am in the hands of a director who knows exactly what she is doing.



twelve

Helen
Helen

Helen
Helen
Helen

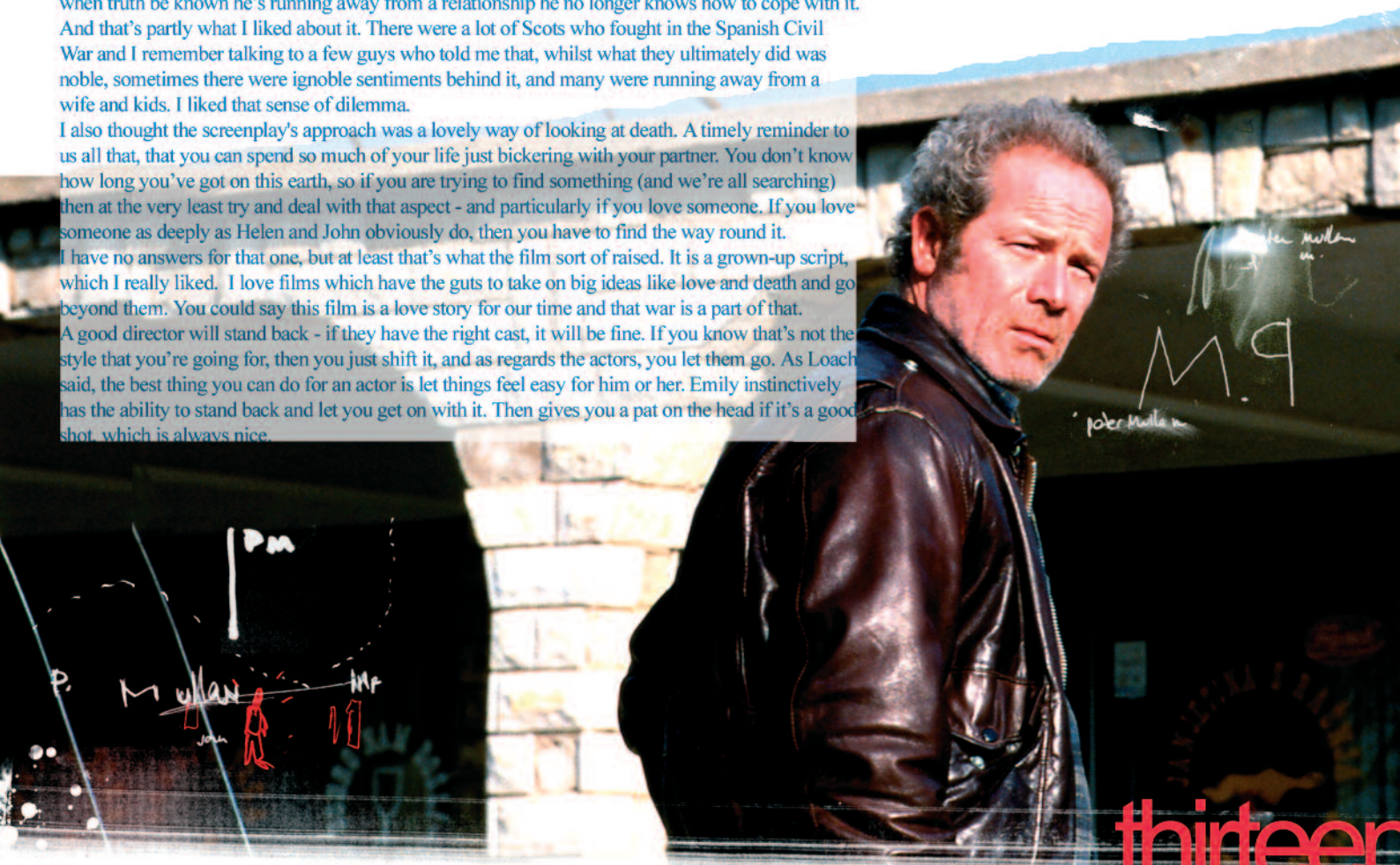
stepeter mullan [John]

John is a guy that runs away to Croatia to deliver medical supplies and ostensibly to do good, when truth be known he's running away from a relationship he no longer knows how to cope with. And that's partly what I liked about it. There were a lot of Scots who fought in the Spanish Civil War and I remember talking to a few guys who told me that, whilst what they ultimately did was noble, sometimes there were ignoble sentiments behind it, and many were running away from a wife and kids. I liked that sense of dilemma.

I also thought the screenplay's approach was a lovely way of looking at death. A timely reminder to us all that, that you can spend so much of your life just bickering with your partner. You don't know how long you've got on this earth, so if you are trying to find something (and we're all searching) then at the very least try and deal with that aspect - and particularly if you love someone. If you love someone as deeply as Helen and John obviously do, then you have to find the way round it.

I have no answers for that one, but at least that's what the film sort of raised. It is a grown-up script, which I really liked. I love films which have the guts to take on big ideas like love and death and go beyond them. You could say this film is a love story for our time and that war is a part of that.

A good director will stand back - if they have the right cast, it will be fine. If you know that's not the style that you're going for, then you just shift it, and as regards the actors, you let them go. As Loach said, the best thing you can do for an actor is let things feel easy for him or her. Emily instinctively has the ability to stand back and let you get on with it. Then gives you a pat on the head if it's a good shot, which is always nice.



ingeborga dapkunaite -- helen

Ingeborga Dapkunaite is best known for her superb role as the mother (Marusia) in **nikita** Mikhailkoy's Academy Award winning film **burnt by the sun**. She has also appeared in Brian de Palma's **mission impossible** and Jean Jacques Annaud's **seven years in tibet**. Of Lithuanian origin, Ingeborga has received many accolades in her home country for her film and theatre work including the *Kinotavr Award for Best Film Actress* for **cynics**, the *Best Actress Special Jury Prize* for her title role in **katia ismailova** and the Russian NIKA Award for *Best Film Actress*. Now based in London, Ingeborga was recently seen on television in the BBC's **'the lost prince'** directed by Stephen Poliakoff, and on the London stage in the **'vagina monologues'**.

peter mullan -- john

Peter Mullan is renowned for his magnificent performance in Ken Loach's **my name is joe**, for which he won *Best Actor Award* at the Cannes Film Festival in 1998. Peter's other film work as an actor includes Michael Winterbottom's **the claim**, Mike Figgis' **miss julie**, Mel Gibson's **braveheart**, Danny Boyle's **trainspotting** and **shallow grave**, Ken Loach's **riff raff**, the BBC's **this little life** and the upcoming **young adam** directed by David MacKenzie. As a writer/director, Peter Mullan won the *Golden Lion* at the Venice Film Festival in 2002 for his second feature **the magdalene sisters**. His first feature film **orphans** also received many awards and gained wide-spread critical acclaim. His television work includes **'ruffian hearts'** directed by David Kane, **'the longest memory'**, **'your cheatin heart'** and **'the vision'**. He has worked extensively in Scottish theatre, including the title role in Michael Boyd's 1990 production of **'macbeth'** and in **'one flew over the cuckoo's nest'** directed by Robert Carlyle.

david warner -- pap

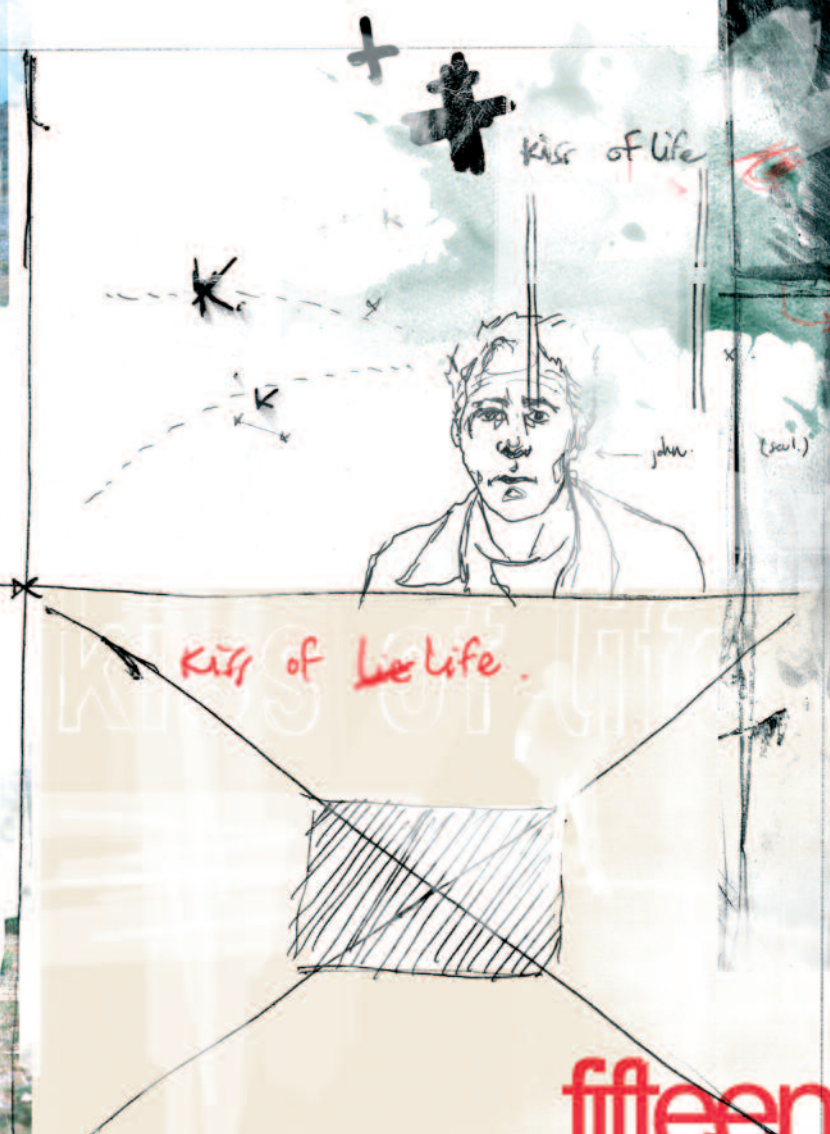
David Warner made his feature film debut in 1963 in *Tom Jones*, followed by the title role in *Morgan: A Suitable Case for Treatment* and he has worked continually on both screen and stage since. His extensive film credits include Tim Burton's **planet of the apes**, **scream 2**, **titanic** (1997), **leading man**, **in the mouth of madness**, **dark at noon**, **star trek 5 and 6**, **the company of wolves**, **the man with two brains**, **the french lieutenant's woman**, **time bandits**, **39 steps**, **providence**, **cross of iron**, **the omen**, **little malcolm**, **a doll's house** and **straw dogs**. His television work includes **'hearts of gold'**, **'dry jekyll & mr hyde'**, **'hornblower'**, **'uncle vanya'**, **'twin peaks'**, **'the secret lives of ian fleming'** and **'masada'** for which he received an Emmy Award for *Best Supporting Actor*. On stage he has played the title roles in **'henry 5'**, **'richard 2'** and **'hamlet'** for the RSC as well as Claudius in **'i claudius'** at the Queens Theatre, London and **'major barbara'** on Broadway.

emily young -- writer and director

Emily Young studied English Literature at Edinburgh University and then attended the directors' programme at the Polish National Film School in Lodz. She graduated with two shorts: **the tower of babel** and **second hand**, which won the 1999 *Cannes Cinéfondation* competition, the *Golden Lion* at the Taipei Film Festival, Taiwan and the *Special Jury Prize* at the Buenos Aires Independent Film Festival 2000. **kiss of life** is Emily's debut feature film. She is currently working on an adaptation of Andrea Ashworth's best-selling memoir, **once in a house on fire**, for producer Kevin Loader (Captain Corelli's Mandolin).

biographies

fourteen



(24 pp.)

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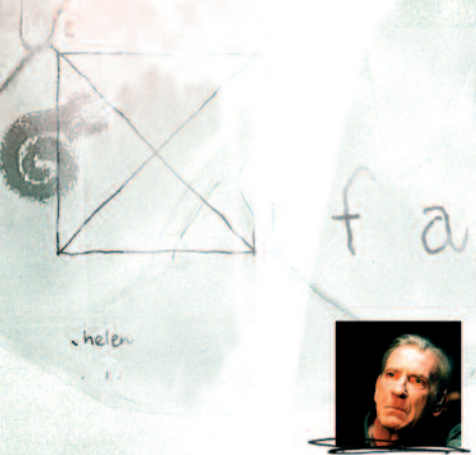
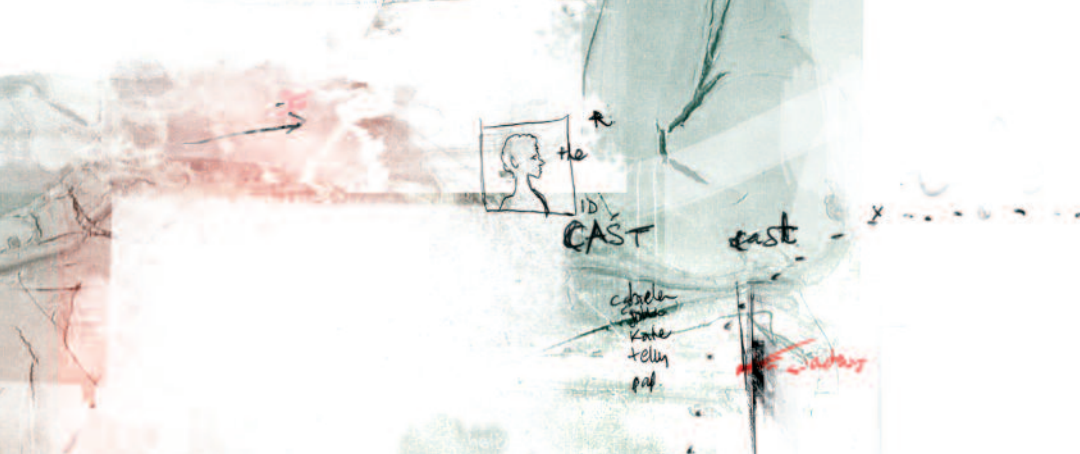
ever

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helen

love

seventeen



ter cast

helen
john
kate
telly
pap

ingeborga dapkunaite
peter mullan
millie findlay
james e. martin
david warner

eighteen

writer and director
cinematography
sound
editor
music
production design
costumes
make-up
cast
producer
associate producer
executive producers

co-producers
line producer croatia

co-produced with the participation of
raphael socha and **anja padel** for **hope and glory pictures international**
production manager **andy stebbing**

a **wild horses film company limited** / **haut et court sarl** coproduction
developed with support from **british screen finance limited** and **alliance atlantis communications corporation**
made with support from the **development fund** and **new cinema fund de film council**

a **film council et bbc films** coproduction
with the participation of **france 3 cinema**, **gimages films** and **sofica gimages 6**
present :

a **baker street media finance take 5** production
in coproduction with
wild horses
and **haut et court**

in
association with **autonomous**

emily young
wojciech szapel
ronald bailey
david charap
murray gold
jane morton
julian day
sue wyburgh
gary davy c.d.g.
gayle griffiths
christopher collins
cat vickers - chiara menage
paul tribits - david m. thompson - bill allan
caroline benjo - carele scotta - simon arnal-szlovak
igor a. nola

CREW
Technical Specs
Crew



M.

Music
 original score:
 music?

music



original score arranged and conducted by **matt dunkley** at olympic studios, engineer : **alan douglas**,
 assisted by : **steve mustarde**, music coordinator : **catherine manners @ manners mcdade**,
 music contractor : **prophet music**
 musicians : **milenia strings**, conductor : **everton nelson**
 solo alto : **vicci wardman**,
 clarinet / piano / percussion : **murray gold**

za tebe stvorena
 written by **m. vlaovic, m. vlaovic et a. pecotic**
 interpreted by **Vesna Pizarovic**
 + **croatia records**

just wanna be
 written by **robert j. walsh**
 + **zomba production music**



twenty



+

MELEN

JOHN

J

twenty one