

Wildhood Press Kit



Joshua Odjick (left), Phillip Lewitski (middle), Avery Winters-Anthony (right) Photo credit: Riley Smith

Wildhood is the Two Spirit odyssey from writer/director/producer Bretten Hannam. Filmed in English and Mi'kmaw, **Wildhood** is written and directed by Hannam (*Wildfire*, *Deep End*) and produced by actor-turned-producer Gharrett Patrick Paon of Rebel Road Films (*I am Syd Stone*, *The Sinner*), with Julie Baldassi (*My Dead Dad's Porno Tapes*, *Dim the Fluorescents*) and Hannam as Producing Partner and Damon D'Oliveira (*The Grizzlies*, *Honey Bee*, *The Book of Negroes*) as Executive Producer.

One of the first film productions in Nova Scotia to start up post-COVID lockdown, filming took place in the Annapolis Valley along the Bay of Fundy in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) in the summer of 2020.

Wildhood stars Phillip Lewitski (*Vikings*, *Utopia Falls*, *Supernatural*), Joshua Odjick (*The Swarm*, *Unsettled*, *Bootlegger*), Michael Greyeyes (*Firestarter*, *Rutherford Falls*, *Blood Quantum*, *True Detective*, *Fear the Walking Dead*), Joel Thomas Hynes (*Little Dog*, *Trickster*, *Frontier*, *Orphan Black*), Steve Lund (*Schitt's Creek*, *Reign*, *Bitten*), newcomers Avery Winters-Anthony (*Wildfire*), Trans Mi'kmaw youth Desna Michael Thomas, Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance Interim Executive Director John R. Sylliboy, and Mi'kmaw elder Becky Julian in a stand out performance. Guillermo Knockwood and Bobby Pierro, (Mi'kmaw leads in *Wildfire*, the short film version), round out the main principal cast.

Principal photography was the next important step on the long journey of this project which began in 2018 with the short film, *Wildfire*, one of five scripts in Canada selected for Whistler Film Festival's 2017 Indigenous Filmmaker Fellowship and played at multiple film festivals internationally. The feature film script won Telefilm's 2018 Pitch This! at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Cinematography for ***Wildhood*** by multi-award winner Guy Godfree (*Giant Little Ones*, *Maudie*, *Wet Bum*), production design by Michael Pierson (*Stage Mother*, *Werewolf*, *Trailer Park Boys*), costume design by Emlyn Murray (*Splinters*, *Forgive Me*, *Halloween Party*), and music by Neil Haverty (*Sleeping Giant*, *Body and Bones*).

Wildhood received financial support from Telefilm Canada, the Canada Media Fund, Nova Scotia Film & Television Production Incentive Fund, the Shaw Rocket Fund, and CBC Films, which provided development support. The Indigenous Screen Office also provided COVID relief funding. The project was developed with the assistance of the CFC, and CFC provided additional support in post-production through the CFC/Netflix Calling Card Accelerator.

Synopsis

In a rural east-coast trailer park, Link lives with his toxic father and younger half-brother Travis. When Link discovers his Mi'kmaw mother could still be alive, it lights a flame and they make a run for a better life. On the road they meet Pasmay, a pow wow dancer drawn to Link. As the boys journey across Mi'kma'ki, Link finds community, identity, and love in the land where he belongs.

A Note from the Director

Pjila'si

This word guides the heart of ***Wildhood***. It's used in modern times to mean welcome. 'dig deeper' and the root of the meaning that's behind it is there—come and take your place. Language speakers and Elders say this phrase was used when someone came visiting and could be applied when entering a dwelling, or coming to the community itself. It implies belonging, that there is a place for each of us where we fit, and it is always there, waiting.



Phillip Lewitski (left), Avery Winters-Anthony (right) Photo credit: Riley Smith

Production Notes

Walking the Land

When watching Bretten Hannam's *Wildhood*, take note that there are two parallel stories playing out concurrently.

On the surface, *Wildhood* opens at the point of no return for Link, the teenage son of Arvin, his white father and Sarah, his late Indigenous mother. His childhood, rough and troubled. The pressures of youth have created mounting frustration and anger that he aims inwards and outwards. When he discovers a collection of birthday cards from his mother that his father has hidden from him, he realizes his mother might still be alive. He knows nothing about her or her Mi'kmaw people. For him, this unknown is a path he hasn't walked, and he senses that it might be the key to finding his place. Burning all the bridges behind him, he and his young half-brother, Travis head out.

On this level, *Wildhood* is a road trip film, a buddy film, a coming-of-age film and a coming out film.

Look deeper and the Indigenous perspective comes into focus, noted writer/director Bretten Hannam, "There's nothing for Link in the trailer park where he has lived his whole life. So he moves forward and 'forward' is the woods, the forest, the back roads, the rivers, the lakes. Stepping into that world, he opens himself up to a connection that's always been there, but now, because he's made space, he allows those things to come alive and that relationship with the land to exist. Walking the land is a healing process in itself. Out of that newly opened space, he meets this oddball, handsome, charming, funny guy, Pasmay, who seems like he's got it together. Pasmay knows the Mi'kmaw language, and he recognizes something in this other teenager and so offers to help because Pasmay's looking for a family of his own. And so the three, Link, Travis and Pasmay, begin to travel together.

"In traveling to find Link's mother, there is a sharing of hardships and triumphs which in turn creates bonds, something Link had never experienced before with anyone other than Travis," continues Hannam. "Along this journey, all the people Link encounters, from the youngest to the oldest, have something to impart, but not in the Western notion of, 'Here's a lesson.' Gradually, Link learns something more profound: to observe, to experience and to listen. He hears many things about his mother that paints an incomplete picture that's often at odds with itself. When things are discordant like that, there must be a truth buried somewhere."



Phillip Lewitski (left), Avery Winters-Anthony (middle), Joshua Odjick (right) Photo credit: Riley Smith

"A key piece of wisdom one Elder shares is that it's hard to do things alone, and that's what the journey all comes down to. Pasmay and Link are from different worlds. What they are trying to do, they can't do alone. It's hard to do things alone. Together is how communities do things, how families do things," Hannam explains. "In Mi'kmaw language, there's a conjugation that reflects two people doing activities together. This would have been more common pre-contact because everywhere you went, into the woods, fishing, hunting, there would be at least two people."

Pasmay, the Two Spirit Dancer

Wildhood is Bretten Hannam's second Two Spirit feature, with the character, Pasmay [Mi'kmaw for Benjamin and pronounced 'Buzz-a-my'] exemplifying that role.

"Two Spirit is a contemporary pan-Indigenous term that encompasses our Indigenous perspectives of gender and sexuality that interconnects with spirituality and cultural identity. It may include any of the terms such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer. Being Two Spirit also binds the historical collective experience into our identity as Two Spirit. It honours the duality of male/female, non-gendered, and non-conforming expressions of gender. The term can be an expression of one's sexuality, or gender, or used interchangeably. It encompasses all of that. That is what being Two Spirited is," says John R. Sylliboy, Interim Executive Director, Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance who played Mother Mary in the film. "The English term Two Spirit was shared by Myra Laramie in 1990 at the Annual Native American Gay and Lesbian Gathering (now referred to as International Two-Spirit Gathering). The term acknowledges the pan-Indigenous LGBTQ identities and non-binary gender identities of Turtle Island (North America)."



Joshua Odjick (left), Phillip Lewitski (right) Photo credit: Riley Smith

All the characters are on a journey of self-discovery, especially Link. Hannam said, "Being Two Spirit means your very nature challenges mainstream ideas of gender and sexuality. When you don't fit into a rigid perception of identity, there is a struggle to break free, shed your skin, and understand yourself. In *L'nuewey* [Mi'kmaw worldview], everything is part of a whole, they are interrelated. Pasmay is a 2S person and he knows this, while Link is someone who is moving into that space, but he doesn't know the depth or meaning of it yet. He is beginning his journey without that connection and it can take many years. He feels fragmented and unbalanced."

Recalling his own evolution, Hannam adds, "For me, I knew it was something, but I had no name for it. It was just a feeling that I did not fit what any of the labels or definitions said. So I see Link being at that stage. The common thing for all of the different characters' paths is love--it is always there, but they aren't ready to see it. Link moves through a fog, trying to find out who he is and where he belongs. Encountering culture, language, and the land help him to heal and rediscover his sense of self, his story. It brings him into that worldview and shows him that he is related to all of the things around him."

The Layered Significance of Filming *Wildhood* in English and Mi'kmaw

The character of the Elder, Elsapet, is played by Mary Rebecca "Becky" Julian, who makes her film debut in *Wildhood*. Born in Old Town on Indian Brook Reserve, Nova Scotia/ Mi'kma'ki, she has been a driving force in the education field for more than 30 years for the Sipekne'katik First Nation and surrounding communities. A survivor of Residential schools, her experiences there have compelled her to work to both protect and preserve her knowledge of Mi'kmaw language and culture. Becky became a certified linguist in 1984 and began teaching the Mi'kmaw language in schools throughout Nova Scotia. She was awarded the Grand Chief Donald Marshall Senior Memorial Elder Award. This award is presented to individuals who work to keep the Mi'kmaw culture alive and thriving.



Becky Julian Photo credit: Riley Smith

Identity and language being so deeply interconnected, the presence of Mi'kmaw dialogue in the script supports the themes of the film. "Our language is dying in some communities. Yes, it's because of the residential school, but you can't blame just the residential schools. You don't hear our language on TV, and you don't hear it on the radio. When connecting or reconnecting with Indigenous culture, you better understand life because our language

is descriptive. And when I say descriptive, everything [in Mi'kmaw] describes what it is and the purpose of it," said Julian.

"Having the Mi'kmaw language in the film is just as important as filming on the land or any cultural teaching or tradition. It's through the language that the relationship between the People and the land is found and can truly be understood. The language expresses a worldview, a way of seeing things, that is different from a Western way of thinking and doing. It is at the core of importance to identity and history. The Mi'kmaw language extends back over 10,000 years and contains the stories of our ancestors, the land that we live on, and the relationships that we've made with each other and with people that have come from other places. Because Mi'kmaw culture is based on oral storytelling and oral histories, the act of speaking as well as listening connects us to those histories and stories every time," professed Hannam.

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Writer/ director/producer Bretten Hannam (left), Joshua Odjick (center), Phillip Lewitski (right) Photo credit: Riley Smith

Wildhood is a story that Hannam has carried with them for many years, inspired by their own experiences and informed by speaking to other people in their community. When

Gharrett was accepted into the Producers Lab in 2017, he reached out to Hannam to see what they were working on. The two had been friends dating back to Paon's previous life as an actor, when Hannam had been the first filmmaker to ever cast him in a short film over 15 years ago: "**Wildhood** was in a first draft phase when I reached out to Brett. I immediately connected with the protagonist's journey. Having never met my own father and having imagined what a journey like Link's might have been like as a kid, I felt I could contribute something to the character's journey and the development the script still needed to go through over the next couple of years."

At the CFC is where Paon met Damon D'Oliveira, who came on as Executive Producer. D'Oliveira in turn introduced the group to Julie Baldassi, who joined the team as a producer. And this little trio of producers put together an interprovincial co-production for Hannam's feature.

Wildhood took a slight detour before coming to fruition. "In order to give financiers the confidence that we could pull off something with a larger budget, we decided to do a short film version. Luckily Brett already had a condensed version of the film which became *Wildfire*. Shot in 2018, *Wildfire* had its world premiere at BFI-Flare London LGBTQ+ Film Festival and with its US premiere at Frameline, went on to have a robust international film festival tour.

Casting

When the time came to cast the feature version of the film, it became apparent that the scale of each character's emotional journey called for experienced actors. Only young Avery Winters-Anthony, who played Travis in the short, returned to reprise that character, while roles were written into the feature for the lead actors from the short so they could also be included.

Philip Lewitski, who plays Link, came to the attention of the director and producers via his work on CBC's *Utopia Falls*. "Literally the moment that each of us finished watching Phillip's audition tape, we all jumped on a group chat and were like, 'Yeah, we found him,'" said Paon.

"Brett and I have always talked about Link at the start of the film being like this untamed wild dog," Paon continued. "The performer needed to be effortlessly rebellious, someone who would fight to the death to protect his kin, but who could also reach into those soft gooey bits that we all have and be willing to share them on screen fearlessly. There's a

protectiveness that he has for Travis, that all brothers have, and the growing importance of the relationship with Pasmay, who becomes a protector for these boys."

The character of Pasmay had to be physically bigger than Link, which is why, in the hopes of landing the role, Joshua Odjick was gaining size through intensive body-building.

Link's vulnerability was not believing in himself, not believing he was worthy of love, while Pasmay's fear was centred around losing this family that he has just created and his ability to come into this brotherly tight bond and make an impact in a really short period of time.



Joshua Odjick (left), Phillip Lewitski (right) Photo credit: Riley Smith

"I was with my mom the first time I read the script," said Phillip Lewitski. "We cried at the end together, and it was this beautiful moment between the two of us. It was at that moment that I knew I had to do this film no matter what it takes. The rehearsal process was pretty intense. Brett has been an actor's dream as a director, so collaborative. They're open to any ideas or thoughts or twists on really anything and that's what created spontaneous, magical moments, in my opinion. This has been quite a journey."

Lewitski was able to mold Link out of experiences in his life, creating a great empathy for the character. "He meets Pasmay at the most confusing time in his life. As much as Travis is this person Link has leaned on up to this moment, he needs someone his age, at his maturity level, that he can have real genuine conversations with and that's when Pasmay appears. And it's funny because even in my own life, I've found that life will present you with the people who are perfect for you at that time. And so it's really beautiful to see that in this story. This has probably been one of the hardest shoots I've ever done, just because of the material and the content that we're trying to put out there. It's been very therapeutic as well for me."



Phillip Lewitski Photo credit: Riley Smith

Joshua Odjick sees Pasmay as a very lonely individual, looking to make something out of himself, and longing for someone: "When he sees Link at the convenience store, he's instantly attracted to him, not just because of looks, but also he sees that Link is in desperate need of help. These are two lone wolves spotting each other, and Pasmay wants to create his own pack. That's why he continues to stick around and help Link and Travis."

The passion Odjick felt for this project was profound, moreso than many actors have for a new project. "I read the script about a year before principal photography even began, and I was scared. I was scared to do this, to do the audition, but when the time came, I

thought this is really fun. I loved the script, and when I read the script again this year once I was cast, I loved it even more. So I worked my ass off for 365 days, 24/7 for this role. And, when I met Gharrett and Brett, I just wanted to do it even more."

Odjick sees **Wildhood** as a film that Indigenous audiences can connect with on a deep level. "They need a voice, and they just don't have that voice just yet. And when they see this film, they'd be and think, "I see myself in these two characters. They make me feel less, less alone in the world, like a hole has been filled in their hearts."



Joshua Odjick Photo credit: Riley Smith

The Strength of the Supporting Cast

Young Travis, played by Avery Winters-Anthony, is Link's half-brother from a different mother and brings a freshness and comedy into the story because he is young enough that he can interject moments of levity into serious situations. He can also deliver with piercing truths because he usually has the wrong thing to say at the exact right time, which in the end makes it somehow perfect for the moment.

Michael Greyeyes, as Smokey, does what Michael Greyeyes does best: delivers gravitas and wit. He becomes the father figure for a brief time for the boys, although he presents

as the cool Mi'kmaw uncle. Off camera, Greyeyes also occupied that same space, assuming the role as a mentor for the younger performers on set.



Michael Greyeyes (left), Phillip Lewitski (right) Photo credit: Riley Smith

The character of Sarah, Link's mother, played beautifully by Savonna Spracklin, is present in spirit all through the story, but she doesn't have substantial screen time which means that her backstory is laid out in front of her performance. "We needed someone who could live up to that, someone who had vulnerability, sensitivity, and also a strength to her. Sarah's seen a lot, been through a lot. She's been on her own journey and now it's dovetailing into Link's. Savonna sent in an audition and Julie Baldassi immediately pointed her out. The amount of emotion and presence she's able to convey is immense, and she fully opened her heart for this role, making the scenes between her and Phillip very special," pointed out Hannam.



Savonna Spracklin Photo credit: Riley Smith

There are additional supporting cast from different Mi'kmaw communities across Nova Scotia who have never acted before. One of those is Desna Michael Thomas, a Transgender youth from Eskasoni First Nation, who plays a character who runs a roadside store. After the filmmakers met Des when casting for the short film, they specifically wrote a role for him in the feature. "Because Des is such a strong improviser, most of that scene is actually just Des doing their own thing. Those lines about hot dogs and rez delicacies... that's all Des in the moment," said Paon.

At the Tiger Lily, it is John Sylliboy, who plays the Two Spirit, iconoclastic Mi'kmaw owner of the bar, Mother Mary. Sylliboy, as the head of the Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance, is the community partner on the film. "The Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance plays an important role in sharing Two Spirit traditions and cultural knowledge. Over the years I've learned so much by volunteering, observing, and attending small gatherings. The Alliance provides essential support to Two Spirit, Indigiqueer, and LGBTQ+ people—cultural, spiritual, and socio-economic. They are an important part of the community and I'm fortunate to learn from them," said Hannam.

And finally, there is Mary Rebecca "Becky" Julian, who plays the Elder, Elsapet. "Bringing Becky on to the project is probably my proudest contribution," said Paon. "When I first

asked if she might consider this and she said yes, I immediately printed off a script, highlighted all her lines, drove to her house, basically taught her how to read a script, told her about the whole project, sat with her for an hour and just prayed that she would agree to do it. Bravely, she said yes."



Phillip Lewitski (left), Becky Julian (right) Photo credit: Riley Smith

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In the search for his mother, "Link doesn't get everything he wants," said Hannam. "He gets something that he needs. He gets a connection. He gets to see where he came from. There's still things to unlearn and to re-learn. And there's still things to discover, but life is certainly a lot better and happier. There is room for something to grow now. And instead of a poorly potted plant in a trailer park scorched to death by the sun, this is a plant in the forest, able to grow and turn into a tree and thrive and bring something back, bring something good."

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

BRETEN HANNAM (Writer/Director/Producer) is a Two Spirit L'nu filmmaker living in Kespukwitk, Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) where they were raised. Their films deal with themes of community, culture, and language with a focus on two spirit and LGBTQ+ identity. They co-wrote the short, *Champagne*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, and wrote/directed *North Mountain*, a Two Spirit thriller that won Best Original Score at the Atlantic Film Festival and the Screen Nova Scotia Award for Best Feature. They also wrote/directed the short film *Wildfire* which premiere at BFI Flare and went on to play at Frameline LGBT Film Festival, as well as Vancouver International Film Festival, ImagineNative, and Inside Out LGBT Film Festival. Bretten is a Fellow of the Praxis Centre for Screenwriters, Outfest Screenwriting Lab, Whistler's Indigenous Filmmaker Fellowship, and the CFC Writers Lab.

GHARRETT PATRICK PAON (Producer) is an actor-turned-producer based in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia). He holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Dalhousie University ('17), is an alumnus of the Canadian Film Centre's - Producer's Lab ('17), and the National Screen Institute's Features First Program ('19). Gharrett is the president of Rebel Road Films, a boutique film & television production company he founded in 2018 and has operated solely since its inception. In the last 4 years Gharrett has endeavored to use the company to help produce his friend's work, which has born a diversified slate of films, series and short form content that highlight an allyship towards queer and Indigenous filmmakers. At the end of 2019 Rebel Road produced *I am Syd Stone*, a 6-episode queer web series by writer/director Denis Theriault, now streaming in six countries worldwide via OutTV. The company has also produced two seasons of *Spirit Talker* for APTN. Recently *The Mohel* by writer/director Charles Wahl, won best live action short at Palm Springs International Short Fest. Gharrett's films have screened at SXSW, BFI-Flare, Frameline, VIFF, FIN:AIFF, Inside Out, Out of Competition at Clermont-Ferrand as part of Canada's Not Short on Talent showcase, and ImagineNative. Recently *Wildfire*, the short film version of ***Wildhood*** won Best Short Film at the Screen Nova Scotia Awards. Rebel Road is currently packaging *Me, My Mom & Sharmila*, the directorial debut of writer/director Fawzia Mirza (*Signature Move*, SXSW '19). *MMMS* recently secured production funding by Telefilm Canada. Rebel Road is also in late-stage development on *Expulsion* by writer/director Andrew Dryden Mortimer, an epic event series about the forgotten history that gave birth to the Cajuns.

Gharrett is the recipient of the prestigious Nova Scotia Talent Trust Young Artist of Excellence Award and the Shelagh Mackenzie Filmmaking Award. His performances on

screen have been nominated for two ACTRA awards. This summer he's been filming a recurring role on the fourth season of *The Sinner* opposite Bill Pullman, while renovating a tiny houseboat moored in Mahone Bay.

JULIE BALDASSI (Producer) is the creative producer and founder of Younger Daughter Films. Her films have played at Sundance, Tribeca, SXSW, Hot Docs, DOC NYC, and the Toronto International Film Festival, and have received awards at the Canadian Screen Awards, the Webby Awards, Cinema Eye Honors. Her 2018 film with director Charlie Tyrell, *My Dead Dad's Porno Tapes*, was short-listed for an Academy Award. In 2019, Julie produced Sofia Banzhaf's TIFF Top Ten-selected *I Am in the World as Free and Slender as A Deer on A Plain* and Tyrell's Sundance/SXSW selected *Broken Orchestra*. Her first feature was co-producing the 2017 micro-budget comedy *Dim the Fluorescents*, starring Claire Armstrong and Naomi Skwarna, which received the Grand Jury Prize at Slamdance. Upcoming projects include *The Incident Report*, writer/director Naomi Jaye's adaptation of the Giller Prize-nominated novel by Martha Baillie, the debut thriller from Sofia Banzhaf with writer Greyson Moore, and Charlie Tyrell's documentary with producers with Mona Panchal, Shannon Riggs, and Clay Tweel.

DAMON D'OLIVEIRA (Executive Producer) Under the banner of Flimshow Inc. and Conquering Lion Pictures, Damon D'Oliveira's films and television series have achieved wide international acclaim. Damon recently produced *The Grizzlies*, which was Canada's highest grossing English language film in 2019 – a searing first feature about an Inuit lacrosse team formed to counter an epidemic of suicide in the community of Kugluktuk. Flimshow Inc. also executive produced the Telefilm Canada-supported feature films: *Honey Bee* (Durban 2018) directed by Rama Rau and *The Rest of Us* starring Heather Graham (TIFF 2019, Palm Springs 2020).

Damon also executive produced the miniseries adaptation of *The Book of Negroes*, based on the best-selling novel by Lawrence Hill. *The Book of Negroes* was nominated for two U.S. Critics Choice Awards by the Broadcast Television Journalists Association for Best Limited Series and Best Actress in a Limited Series and won the CableFAX Program Award for Best Miniseries - a first for a Canadian production. The series debuted to historic ratings on the Canadian Broadcasting Network, marking a twenty-five year high for a one-hour drama premiere. In the US, it also drew landmark ratings for BET, as their first-ever Black period mini-series. *The Book of Negroes* stars Aunjanue Ellis (*Quantico*, *The Help*), along with Oscar-winners Cuba Gooding Jr. & Louis Gossett Jr and three-time Oscar nominee, Jane Alexander.

Damon's other films include first feature, *Rude*, which world premiered in selection at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard section. Damon has also produced some of Canada's most innovative feature films, including *Poor Boy's Game* (2007) (BERLIN

TIFF 2007), *Lie With Me* (BERLIN TIFF 2005), *Love Come Down* (BERLIN TIFF 2000) and *What We Have/Ce Qu'on A* (Winner Best Franco-Canadian Film at Rendez-vous du Cinema Quebecois 2015, Montreal, Best Canadian Feature at Inside Out Toronto LGBT Festival 2015, Best Feature Film, Barcelona Film Festival 2015). Damon is actively involved in the Canadian film community, sitting on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Media Producers Association, The Black Screen Office and Bell Media's The Harold Greenberg Fund.

GUY GODFREE (Director of Cinematography) Guy's feature film cinematography work includes the multiple Canadian Screen Award winning *Maudie*, directed by Aisling Walsh and starring Ethan Hawke and Sally Hawkins. (Telluride, TIFF, Berlinale) For *Maudie*, Guy was honoured by the Canadian Society of Cinematographers with the 2017 award for Best Theatrical Feature, as well as an international nomination for the IMAGO Awards in Finland. Guy was also recently nominated for a Canadian Society of Cinematographer Award for the film *Let Him Go* with director Thomas Bezucha and starring Kevin Costner, Diane Lane and Leslie Manville. Other credits include *Slash Back* with director Nyla Innuksuk, *The Parting Glass* directed by Stephen Moyer and starring Anna Paquin, Cynthia Nixon, Melissa Leo, Rhys Ifans, and Ed Asner. *Giant Little Ones* (TIFF 2018) starring Kyle MacLachlan and Maria Bello, Jordan Canning's feature *Suck It Up* (Slamdance 2017), So Yong Kim's *Lovesong* (Sundance 2016) and Lindsay Mackay's *Wet Bum* (TIFF 2014).

Guy is originally from the Maritime province of Nova Scotia, Canada and currently splits his time between New York City and Toronto.

SHAWN RYKISS (Editor) is an award-winning film and television editor based in Toronto, Canada. He is a graduate of Vancouver Film School and an alumnus of Norman Jewison's Canadian Film Centre Editor's Lab. Shaun served as supervising editor for five television docuseries before transitioning into scripted film and series. His work on the digital series, *I am Syd Stone*, garnered him the 2021 Canadian Cinema Editors award for Best Editing in Web Based Series, and his first two feature films, *Wildhood* (dir. Bretten Hannam) and *Learn to Swim* (dir. Thyrone Tommy), will premiere at the 2021 Toronto International Film Festival.

MICHAEL PIERSON (Production Designer) is a Nova Scotia based production designer and art director focusing on design for commercial, event and independent production. With an involved background in installation art and Photography, he made a fluid transition to design after moving to the east coast more than a decade ago. His creativity is heavily influenced by east coast stories and directors. Notable credits include *Werewolf* (2016), *Trailer Park Boys* (2013-2017), *Little Grey Bubbles* (2018), and *The Mohel* (2021).

EMLYN MURRAY (Costume Designer) is a costume designer based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. An alumna of Costume Studies at Dalhousie University, Emlyn has been designing for theatre and film since 2014. Recent design credits for film include *Studio Black!* (CBC), *Forgive Me* (Emotion Pictures), *These Woods are Haunted* (Travel Channel), *Splinters* (Emotion Pictures), *Halloween Party* (Northeast Films), *8:37 Rebirth* (Rebirth Films Inc). In 2018 she won the Robert Merritt Theatre Award for Outstanding Costume Design for her work on *Princess Rules* (HEIST).

NEIL HAVERTY (Composer) As a founding member of Toronto ensemble Bruce Peninsula and as a solo artist, Haverty has released several critically acclaimed LPs and has toured extensively across North America, including headlining appearances at SXSW and the Dawson City Music Festival. As an audio/visual composer, Neil has contributed to numerous short and feature films (*Sleeping Giant*, *Small Town Murder Songs*, *Burns Point*) and has screened work at the Cannes Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, among others. His recent film work includes Newfoundland-based coming-of-age feature, *Body & Bones*, and the Canadian Screen Award-winning animated short *Hot Flash*. Haverty is an alumnus of the Slight Family Music Lab at the Canadian Film Centre and is a co-founder and Senior Manager of the music video support initiatives Prism Prize & The MVP Project.

ABOUT THE CAST

PHILLIP LEWITSKI (LINK) is an actor to watch, most notably known for his Series Lead role in the Hulu original series *Utopia Falls*, Phillip portrays 'Apollo,' a quiet and calm natured dreamer, who works as a mechanic, and brings his musical talents through drumming to the show. The series is a genre bending take on a coming of age story, where a group of teens in a distant future colony uncover a forbidden archive of historical, cultural, and musical relics. With the help of rap icon Snoop Dogg as the voice of the futuristic Siri, they use the power of music to ignite change in their reality to expose the truth.

Phillip has been a performer since an early age, having grown up in a musical household with seven siblings. He was homeschooled which allowed Phillip to focus heavily on theater and drama studies as extra-curricular activities. He was able to develop his acting chops early on in life, giving him the foot hold to pursue a professional career in Vancouver and Los Angeles. He won the provincial Drama Award at St. Helena Theatre and was enrolled in the Bishop Carroll Performing and Visual Arts program. He is currently studying at The Lee Strasberg Institute. He can be seen in the cult favorite series CW's

Supernatural and in the series finale of History Channel's *Vikings* where you meet his character 'Wejitu.'

Born in Canada, Phillip comes from a French, Ukrainian, and Mohawk ancestry. His heritage is a strong part of his identity and he strives to learn and explore his cultural roots. He grew up playing the piano, violin, and drums, with drumming being a way to connect with his Mohawk culture. Phillip lives vulnerably with an open heart, embracing all of life's trials and tribulations which he believes makes him a better actor. He spends his free time immersed in art, drawing with charcoal, and travelling. He is a huge advocate for mental health and volunteers his time working with youth struggling from abusive homes, domestic violence, and drugs. At the age of 9, he published a book titled Inside My Head which he spent his teen years writing and documenting his experiences growing up with hope to impact other teens struggling with life's ups and downs.

JOSH ODJICK (Pasmay) Born in Ottawa, Ontario, Joshua Odjick was raised in Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation community. He began his acting career after finishing high school and while studying small business development during the day, he went to acting class in evenings and on weekends. Joshua's most recent credits include: *Bootlegger*, *Unsettled*, *Coroner*, and *Boundless*. He loves music and outdoors and has a knack of speaking with animals. His goal is to someday tell a story behind camera to showcase his culture of legends and stories of Anishinabeg, such as the creation story, little people, medicine people, etc.

AVERY WINTERS-ANTHONY (Travis) 13 year old Avery Winters-Anthony from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, got his big break when he was discovered at his Muay Thai gym after overhearing a conversation between Gharrett Patrick Paon and Bretten Hannam about a short film they were producing. After declaring his love of acting and desire to be in a movie, he was cast in their short film *Wildfire*, the precursor to *Wildhood*. He loved his first experience on set and was thrilled when only three months later, he was cast in another short film; *Popsy*, directed by Richard Fleming, and based on the short story by Stephen King. Being able to return to set in the role of Travis in 2020 for the feature *Wildhood* was an incredible experience for Avery. Avery also loves to kayak, play guitar, go skateboarding and hang with his two dogs Fluffer and Rosie. Acting lights Avery up in a way that can be felt by everyone around him.

MICHAEL GREYEVES (Smokey) is a multi-hyphenate talent - actor, director, choreographer, and scholar - whose diverse career from stage to screen spans over 25 years. He is currently filming the Universal/Blumhouse adaptation of Stephen King's bestselling novel *Firestarter*. Greyeyes will step into the role of "Rainbird," which was played by Oscar winner George C. Scott in the 1984 movie. Most recently, Greyeyes

starred in the thriller *Wild Indian*, the feature debut by writer/director Lyle Mitchell Corbine Jr, which premiered in competition at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival. The film, which will be released theatrically later this year, follows two Anishinaabe men who are inextricably bound together after covering up the savage murder of a schoolmate. He received rave reviews from critics for his gripping portrayal of “Makwa/Michael.” Greyeyes currently stars opposite Ed Helms in the Peacock comedy “Rutherford Falls.” Co-created and executive produced by Helms, Mike Schur (“The Good Place”) and Sierra Teller Ornelas, the series is set in a small town in upstate New York and the Native American reservation it borders.

In the past two years, Greyeyes has made impactful and resonating appearances in a handful of critically acclaimed projects including recurring roles on HBO’s anthology crime drama “True Detective,” opposite Mahershala Ali and Stephen Dorff, and the HBO limited series, “I Know This Much Is True,” opposite Mark Ruffalo. He also starred in the independent horror film, *Blood Quantum*, written and directed by Mi’gmaq filmmaker Jeff Barnaby, which featured an Indigenous cast. The groundbreaking film, which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival, blends horror with sociopolitical subtext, imagining a world in which those with Indigenous blood are immune to a vicious zombie apocalypse. It topped this year’s Canadian Screen Awards with seven honors, including “Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role,” for which Greyeyes won for his portrayal of “Traylor.”

JOEL THOMAS HYNES (Arvin) is a multidisciplinary artist from Newfoundland, Canada, and is creator, writer, star, and executive producer of *Little Dog*. Hynes’ latest novel, *We’ll All Be Burnt in Our Beds Some Night*, won the 2017 Governor General’s Literary Award for English language fiction and was also included on the long list for the 2017 Scotiabank Giller Prize as well as the winner for the BMO Winterset Award. Hynes has worked in the Canadian film and television industry for more than fifteen years as a writer, actor and director. He’s written and directed two award-winning short films, *Clipper Gold* and *Little Man*, and is the author of numerous acclaimed books and stage plays including the novels *Down to the Dirt* and *Right Away Monday*. Hynes recently penned the screen adaptation of his book *Say Nothing Saw Wood* under the title *Cast No Shadow*, which was nominated for four 2015 Canadian Screen Awards including Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Motion Picture.

As an actor he’s performed numerous lead and principal roles for TV and film, including *Down to the Dirt*, *Crackie*, *Cast No Shadow*, *Book of Negroes*, *ReGenesis*, *Rookie Blue*, *Republic of Doyle*, *Mary Kills People* and *Orphan Black*. Joel recently starred in the indie feature *Scattered & Small* as well as a supporting role in *Goalie* opposite Mark O’Brien. Most recently, Joel was a series regular in the television series *Trickster* and guest starred on *Pretty Hard Cases*, both for CBC. Hynes’ awards include The 2014 AFF’s Best Atlantic

Screenwriter, The Newfoundland and Labrador Artist of the Year Award, Nickel Independent Film Festival People's Choice Award, The Yorkton Film Festival Best Actor Award, The Lawrence Jackson Creative Writing Award, The Cuffer Prize, Summerworks Theatre Festival Best Dramatic Script Award and the Newfoundland Arts and Letters Award for Best Dramatic Script. Hynes is an alumnus of the Cineplex Screenwriter's Lab at the Canadian Film Centre in Toronto. He can be seen in the current season of Netflix's drama *Frontier*.

STEVE LUND (Dale) A proud son of Nova Scotia, Steve took his family's entertainer gene to a new place after hanging up his hockey skates in exchange for a life in showbiz. Once graduated from the Vancouver Film School, he started to get roles on TV shows such as *Blue Mountain State*, and *Haven* before scoring a series regular role in Space's werewolf drama *Bitten*.

Since then, he has landed numerous roles for the Hallmark Channel and recurred as the highborn rogue 'Luc Narcisse' in The CW's *Reign*. In addition, he has also starred in the two lead roles of 'Adam Darling' in CBC's reboot of *Street Legal* and 'Mitch' in Warner Bro's horror-comedy, *The Banana Splits Movie*. Most notably, Steve recurred as the controversial town hottie 'Jake' in the CBC Emmy winning series *Schitt's Creek*. Upcoming projects include the raucous comedy *Faith Heist* as well as the Hallmark holiday film *Baby, It's Cold Inside*.

SAVONNA SPRACKLIN ((Heek'al)) (Sarah) is an actor, writer, editor and director. She is a member of the Nisga'a Nation. Savona's recent credits include a Recurring Guest role on *Tribal* from director/show runner Ron E. Scott with Prairie Dog Films/APTN, and a Guest Star role on *Big Sky* from ABC. She is an award-winning actress for her debut performance in *Telegraph Cove*, and an alumna from Vancouver Film School Acting for Film & Television. Her credits also include *Hold The Dark* directed by Jeremy Saulnier, *Yellowstone* directed by Taylor Sheridan, and *Mohawk Girls* directed by Tracey Deer.