



BFI presents
in association with AMARO FILMS
a MOTION GROUP PICTURES
and CONNECTIC STUDIO production

DEPARTURE



Written and Directed by
ANDREW STEGGALL

Produced by
**PIETRO GREPPI
GUILLAUME TOBO
CORA PALFREY**

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Executive Produced by
**DANIEL CAMPOS PAVONCELLI, GEORGIA OETKER
STEPHANIE KEELAN, KARINE RIAHI**

-
Cast
**JULIET STEVENSON, ALEX LAWTHOR, PHÉNIX BROSSARD
NIAMH CUSACK, PATRICE JUIFF
and FINBAR LYNCH**

-
1:85 - 109mins - HD - UK/FR - English/French - 2015

UK Distributor: PECCADILLO PICTURES
Contact: publicity@peccapics.com

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SYNOPSIS

An English mother and her teenage son spend a week packing up the contents of their remote holiday house in the South of France. Fifteen-year-old Elliot struggles with his dawning sexuality and an increasing alienation from his mother, Beatrice. She in turn is confronted by the realisation that her marriage to his father, Philip, has grown loveless and the life she knows is coming to an end. When an enigmatic local teenager, Clément, quietly enters their lives, both mother and son are compelled to confront their desires and, finally, each other. *Departure* is an intimate story beginning at dawn on the first day and ending at night on the sixth, charting the end of a summer, the end of a childhood and the end of an otherwise nuclear, middleclass family.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



Departure is a personal film: a mythologised eulogy to love and loss drawing on a variety of sources. The intention is to conjure through narrative, character and image a film that expresses a number of perspectives on growing up. Both Elliot and Beatrice must grow through their fears and longings into individuals more aware of each other and of a common need for love and acceptance. The film looks beyond the everyday and personal to present a cinematic experience touched by imagination and landscape.

In making *Departure* I have sought to find expression for a number of preoccupations that are also expressed in my short films. I am intrigued by the idea of knowing things subconsciously or intuitively before that knowledge has coalesced into a concrete certainty; the idea that within a kind of innocence exists a pre-emptive experience. I found myself expressing this in the screenplay as a kind of "thickening of time." I have tried to avoid the cinematic cliché of slow motion to express this but rather have sought to use images and performance. The sense of being submerged became central to the film, both in the fear of drowning it evokes but also in the density of the atmosphere implied. This image coincides in the film with the familiar trope of water as expressive of sexual desire as well as rebirth. The images that occur in the film are not intended as symbols and will not, I hope, be "recognized" as such. Rather they are part of the fabric of the film and extensions of the way in which both the characters and I perceive the world, subconsciously and intuitively.

Departure borrows from some of my own recollections and has combined them with aspects of Dvorak's opera, *Rusalka*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In its quiet way, *Departure* sets out to explore what it means to long for love. It is the particular longing of individuals who exist in proximity to each other and yet who find themselves isolated. It is the longing of people who fear the consequence of that longing.

My hope is that the exploration of both the mother and son's transformation will lend the story an element of universality and make it resonate both with a young audience on the cusp of their own unfurling experience and with an older audience, conscious of the wall we build to hold back the reservoir of desires that we fear might otherwise overcome us.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Departure is the debut feature film by writer/director Andrew Steggall, who first began work on the script in 2012.

Set up by London-based Pietro Greppi for Motion Group Pictures and Guillaume Tobo of Paris-based Connectic Studio, the project was selected by the BFI Film Fund for development support in late 2012 and was one of three recipients of their Summer 2013 round of First Feature Awards for production funding.

After securing theatrical distribution commitments from Peccadillo Pictures for the UK and Jour2Fete in France and international sales representation with Charlotte Mickie of Mongrel International, Departure closed its financing in Summer 2014 via a mix of private equity and a partnership with UK-based Amaro Films, headed by Cora Palfrey and Daniel Campos Pavoncelli.

With Juliet Stevenson, Alex Lawther and Phénix Brossard in the lead cast, principal photography took place on location in the Languedoc region in the South of France in Autumn 2014, with one day of underwater filming in Essex, UK. The film was edited in Paris, followed by post-production at Met Film Post in Ealing, London, in Spring and Summer 2015.

Mongrel first announced the project at Berlin EFM 2015, with Mickie commenting: "It's a pleasure to see Juliet Stevenson, a wonderful actress, in such a deep rich part; to watch Alex Lawther build on his recent success and to discover newcomer Phénix Brossard, who brings a brooding French touch to this intense British drama. Andrew Steggall has a real voice and eye – every frame is picture-perfect, every emotion elegantly captured. This is real cinema – moody, visually gorgeous and acutely sensitive."

Juliet Stevenson noted: "As soon as I began to read the Departure script, I knew I wanted to be part of it. It was one of the best screenplays I had read in years – freshly original, subtle, bold and beautiful in its way. Shooting was an equally rich experience – a fantastic cast to work with, a great crew and a supportive and imaginative production team. I have great hopes for the film."

"When I first read Departure – added Alex Lawther – I found it so beautiful and delicate that I was almost frightened of auditioning, at the prospect of getting beneath the skin of Elliot without breaking it. Yet Andrew has a way of telling a story that is like allowing you inside his head, so that under his direction none of that fear was there, but instead a deep love for the world he had created."

"First features are an enormous challenge – commented Steggall – From writing and refining the screenplay, to finding the finance and partners necessary to get into production, to securing the perfect cast and then actually making the film. Departure was no exception. But it has also been a profound pleasure: working with a great cast, supportive producers and imaginative creative team. The resulting picture is one I am proud of and one that I look forward to sharing with audiences."

BIOGRAPHIES

ANDREW STEGGALL - Writer/Director

Andrew trained as an actor at London's Central School Of Speech and Drama. Amongst other stage and screen appearances, he starred in Stephen Daldry's *An Inspector Calls* in the West End. He later turned his work to theatre directing with a production of *Over Gardens Out* at the Southwark Playhouse. Steggall directed *L'Histoire du Soldat* by Stravinsky at the Old Vic Theatre with Jeremy Irons and the Philharmonia Orchestra and in a second production with Julian Glover and actors and musicians from Baghdad. This production was workshopped by Andrew in Baghdad during the occupation in 2005 and later in Kurdistan. He staged *La Tragedie de Carmen* in Ireland and London and *The Lighthouse* by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies in Montepulciano, Italy.

Steggall has written and directed four short films. His first one, *To the Marriage of True Minds*, about two young Iraqi men in London, premiered at the Milan Film Festival and won entry into over 40 film festivals worldwide. It was nominated for the Iris prize in Cardiff and won the Goethe Institute prize at the Zebra poetry film festival in Berlin. His second short, *Sparrow*, captured the fragility of an old man and his death. His third film *The Red Bike*, a tender gay coming of age story, was awarded funding through Film London's Borough Scheme and premiered at the London Film Festival. It won the Iris UK Best Short film prize at Cardiff in 2011. Steggall's most recent short, *The Door*, an adaptation of an HG Wells short story starring Charles Dance, premiered in Official Selection at the Warsaw Film Festival in October 2012.

Filmography

The Door 22mins (2012), The Red Bike 11mins (2011), Sparrow 12 mins (2010), The Marriage Of True Minds 12mins (2010)

PIETRO GREPPI - Producer

Pietro Greppi began his film career in New York, first gaining experience in development at Killer Films and later working in sales and distribution at Magnolia Pictures on titles such as Bon Joon-Ho's The Host, Man on Wire and Let The Right One In. Upon relocating to London, he worked across the sales and financing arms of Goldcrest, helping source and manage projects including Andrea Arnold's Wuthering Heights and The Iron Lady. His first independent production was the award-winning science fiction short film The Nostalgist (2014 - winner at the Palm Springs, Giffoni and Leeds festivals amongst others), written and directed by London-based Giacomo Cimini from a story by NY Times best-selling author Daniel H. Wilson (Robopocalypse), starring Lambert Wilson and Samuel Joslin. Departure is Greppi's first feature production. He is developing a slate of feature films with both Cimini and Steggall while also acting as an independent film consultant and assessor for a number of UK film initiatives. He earned a BFA with honors in Film & Television from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and a Bachelor of Business for the Arts, Culture and Communication from Milan's Bocconi University.

GUILLAUME TOBO - Producer

Guillaume Tobo started as an actor both in France and the UK where he worked in television and film with Richard Curtis, Ben Hopkins, Mehreen Saigol and on stage with Martin Charnin, John Wright and Catherine Mendelsson. In the meantime he had the opportunity to work with Humbert Balsam and to be the line producer for the Cannes Film Festival TV of a daily TV magazine about the Marché du Film. Back to France and to theatre, he set up a research unit at the Odeon National Theatre and turned then to directing. It led him to perform and produce a number of shows - the last one both in French and English and coproduced by the British Council and the Arts Council. Finally he turned to film and launched Connectic Studio. Departure is his first feature as a producer. He is currently producing a transmedia project about the New economy co-financed by Pictanovo (French North Region Fund) and launching his second feature - a comedy coproduced with Belgium. He is also developing the second feature of an English director currently based in Montreal.

CORA PALFREY - Producer

Cora Palfrey is an entrepreneurial accountant with extensive UK and US experience in independent and feature film production and distribution environments. Her career started in the independent sector as Financial Controller for the UK distributor First Independent Films, working on notable releases such as Dirty Dancing, Dumb & Dumber, Misery, City Slickers, GI Jane and The Lawnmower Man. In working for Hammer Films, she managed the due diligence process of the Hammer Film sale to Exclusive Media Group. While holding the position of European CFO with Exclusive, she was involved in closing the finance of a number of UK and US productions including the UK's biggest ever home-produced horror film, The Woman in Black, as well as The Ides of March, The Way Back, The Resident and Let Me In. She held the position of COO at Cascade Pictures, a boutique film development financier, successfully raising a small fund to develop a number of feature films, of which she is executive producer. In 2014, she co-founded Amaro Films, a UK film production company. Departure is their first co-production.

DANIEL CAMPOS PAVONCELLI - Executive Producer

Daniel Campos Pavoncelli is currently responsible for assessing and packaging projects at Milan-based Indiana Production Company, concentrating primarily on the commercial prospects in the international marketplace. Having started his career at the Rome International Film Festival, he moved to Exclusive Media in London working predominately with the sales and marketing team on films such as Let Me In, The Woman in Black and The Ides of March. Prior to joining Indiana he worked at Cascade Media Development, financing the development of projects from major UK producers such as Gareth Unwin and Nick Barton. In 2014 he set up with partner Cora Palfrey UK production outfit Amaro Films. Departure is their first co-production. Daniel attended London Metropolitan University where he graduated with BA Hons in Professional Communications, and he holds an MA in Film Industry from Westminster University. As part of his studies he also spent 6 months in New York at NYU Tisch School of the Arts.



JULIET STEVENSON - Actor (Beatrice)

Juliet Stevenson is one of Britain's leading actors. She has worked extensively for the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre and the Royal Court, winning an Olivier award for her performance as Paulina in Death and The Maiden in 1991. Most recently she has starred in Beckett's Happy Days at The Young Vic to huge critical

acclaim, which due to popular demand returned for a second run. Her films include *Truly, Madly, Deeply*; *Bend it Like Beckham*; *When Did You Last See Your Father?*; *Being Julia*; *Pierpoint*; *Mona Lisa Smile*; and *Diana*. Recent television work includes her starring role in Sky Living's supernatural thriller *The Enfield Haunting* and series regulars on two series of *Atlantis* and *The Village*. Other television work includes *Place of Execution*, *The Accused*, *The Hour*, and *White Heat*. She was awarded the CBE in 1999.



ALEX LAWATHER - Actor (Elliot)

Alex Lawther came to Andrew Steggall's attention in his debut theatre role as Blakemore in the West End transfer of David Hare's acclaimed play, *South Downs*. Further theatre work included the role of Ryan in *Fault Lines* and Jamie in *The Glass Supper*, both staged at London's Hampstead Theatre. In film, Alex played the young Alan Turing in Morten Tyldum's *The Imitation Game* and Isaac in Morgan Matthews' *X+Y*. For the former he was the Winner of the Young British Performer

of the Year at the London's Critics' Circle Awards 2014 and nominated for Best British Newcomer, BFI London Film Festival. Most recently he has filmed the pilot for HBO series *Virtuoso*, playing Battista Gallo.



PHÉNIX BROSSARD - Actor (Clément)

Phenix Brossard is a young French actor discovered on the street and revealed by his lead role in the French feature *La Lisière*. After his role in *Departure*, he performed in *Chocolat* by Roshdy Zem alongside Omar Sy. He is also a drum player and the lead singer in a rock band.

BRIAN FAWCETT - Director of Photography

After several years working in the film industry and then a good stint at the National Film school where his graduation film *Blackwater* went on to be shown at many international festivals picking up prizes in Greece and LA, and making the selection for *Camerimage* in Poland. Brian has been shooting around the world on a wide range of projects; commercials, fashion films, music promos, documentaries and shorts. So far in 2015 Brian has shot an O2 spot with Blink, screened the short *Saturday* at the Sundance Film Festival and has completed post on his first feature length film the BFI funded *Departure*.

DOUNIA SICHOV - Editor

Dounia Sichov has edited 5 feature films in 5 years, as well as many short films, and art videos. She worked with Antoine D'Agata on *Atlas*, selected in Rome Film Festival, CPH-DOX, Rotterdam, etc; Eva Pervolovici on *Marussia*, selected in Berlin Film Festival and winner of the special mention of Jury of Fifib; Abel Ferrara on *Pasolini*, selected in Venice Film Festival and Toronto; and Andrew Steggall on *Departure*, supported by the British Film Institute. She has a new project with Abel Ferrara called *No Cannes Do*. Dounia is also an actress working in theatre and film.

JOOLS SCOTT - Composer

Jools' musical life started as a choral scholar at St Paul's Cathedral where he performed alongside the likes of Evelyn Glennie and Sir Simon Rattle. His classical work has been performed in St Paul's Cathedral, the Royal Albert Hall, the Purcell Room and Bath Abbey, with international ensembles and choirs. Recent big scale pieces include *The Cool Web : A Robert Graves Oratorio* and *Extraordinary Creatures*, both collaborations with librettist Sue Curtis, with whom Jools also wrote two operas, *Vice* - a reworking of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and *Demon Lover* - a chamber work based on the short story by Elizabeth Bowen. Media work includes collaborations with Will Becher and Aardman (*Off Beat*), BAFTA winning director Mikey Please's second short film *Marilyn Myller*, and two short films with Andrew Steggall, *Sparrow* (2010) and *The Door* (2011). Future projects include a musical based on *Dracula* and a concert setting of a selection of Shakespeare's Sonnets.

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FR Production Company: CONNECTIC STUDIO
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CREDITS

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Andrew Steggall

Produced By
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Guillaume Tobo
Cora Palfrey

Executive Producers
Daniel Campos Pavoncelli
Georgia Oetker
Stephanie Keelan
Karine Riahi

Starring
Juliet Stevenson
Alex Lawther
Phénix Brossard
Niamh Cusack
Patrice Juiff
And Finbar Lynch

Director of Photography
Brian Fawcett

Editor
Dounia Sichov

Original Music By
Jools Scott

Costume Designer
Holly Waddington

Make-Up & Hair Designer
Stephanie Smith

Sound Designer
Tom Drew