

# HOLDING THE MAN

## PRESS KIT

Directed by Neil Armfield  
Written by Tommy Murphy  
Produced by Kylie du Fresne  
Based on the memoir "Holding The Man" by Timothy Conigrave



SCREEN AUSTRALIA, GOALPOST FILM, SNOW REPUBLIC  
present  
in association with SCREEN NSW and FILM VICTORIA  
a GOALPOST PICTURES production  
in association with HTM PRODUCTIONS

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RYAN CORR CRAIG STOTT KERRY FOX CAMILLA AH KIN SARAH SNOOK with GUY PEARCE and  
ANTHONY LAPAGLIA

“HOLDING THE MAN”

Casting Directors NIKKI BARRETT NATALIE WALL Hair & Makeup Designer FIONA REES-JONES

Costume Designer ALICE BABIDGE Production Designer JO FORD Composer ALAN JOHN  
Editor DANY COOPER

Director of Photography GERMAIN MCMICKING Associate Producer TOMMY MURPHY

Executive Producers CAMERON HUANG ROSEMARY BLIGHT BEN GRANT TRISTAN WHALLEY  
RICHARD PAYTEN ANDREW MACKIE

Based on the Book “HOLDING THE MAN” by TIMOTHY CONIGRAVE

Screenplay by TOMMY MURPHY Produced by KYLIE DU FRESNE Directed by NEIL ARMFIELD

Soundtrack available through



Book published by Penguin Random House Australia



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## One Liner

At last, a love story for everyone.

## One Paragraph Synopsis

Based on the much loved and hugely successful memoir and stage play of the same name, HOLDING THE MAN is the warm, funny and achingly sad story of the 15 year long love affair between Timothy Conigrave and the boy he fell in love with at high school, John Caleo. Tim was an aspiring actor. John, the captain of the school football team. Their relationship blossomed and endured in the face of prejudice, adversity and the cruel illness that devastated the gay community in the '80s.

## Short Synopsis

The course of teenage love rarely runs smooth, but this is especially true when you're secretly gay in an Aussie all-male school in the 1970s and entranced by the captain of the football team.

A pair of star-crossed lovers, Tim and John meet when Tim is in a high-school production of Romeo and Juliet. The encounter ignites a romance that endures for 15 years to laugh in the face of everything life throws at it – the separations, the discriminations, the temptations, the jealousies and the losses.

Based on Timothy Conigrave's cult-classic and hilarious memoir, and the inspiration for the award winning stage play also by Tommy Murphy, HOLDING THE MAN is the remarkable true-life love story that speaks across generations, sexualities and cultures.

## One Page Synopsis

Tim Conigrave – high school actor, hopeless romantic - is up against it. He's fallen in love...

...with the captain of the football team.

It's Australia in the 1970s and Tim's at an all-boys Catholic school. John is beautiful, calm, athletic. Tim is transfixed. And John has no idea who Tim is. "I'm in your geography class."

When Tim dares to invite John to see him perform in Romeo and Juliet, John doesn't even bother to show up. Brash Tim is undeterred. He puts it all on the line – the phone line – and makes his loving declaration. Astonishingly, his courage is rewarded; John accepts. Life can be extraordinary and Tim's is an account of one lived to its fullest.

Based on Timothy Conigrave's cherished memoir and the award-winning stage play, *HOLDING THE MAN* is the hilarious and life affirming tale of two star-crossed lovers.

Even though the impulse to disapprove is strong and the attacks against them mount, there is something so right about this duo being together – they are a force nobody can deny. Even John's father compliments Tim on bringing John out of himself. That is before he knows the true nature of their attraction to one another, before he finds a love letter that brings it all undone.

The secret is out. John's father on the war-path. The young lovers are torn apart. They escape together in the night and make promises to be together forever. They do not know a bigger threat looms on the horizon...

In 1985, a decade later, Tim and John are living together in Sydney, now in their mid 20s. They are tested. They are sure they are safe. A shock diagnosis tells them otherwise. The story catches up on an epidemic that savaged a generation. Their doctor suggests that it is likely John infected Tim, a horror realisation that cripples John. "How did this happen?" he asks.

A beautiful memory takes us back to the carefree moments at the outset of 1980s. Tim and John are at university where Tim will spread his wings artistically, politically and sexually and where John will struggle with his disloyalty. In this complex union, the greatest affront to their happiness seems to come from within. But time and love heals and the pair reunites with a kiss.

Their devotion to each other will triumph, even when illness portends to be the one thing that will tear them apart. They endure the burden of pain and a vicious contest over wills and last rites. The disease attacks the footballer's body and the actor's mind. When Tim is excluded from his proper place in John's requiem, he sits in quiet fury. But Tim, the boy who dared to phone and profess his love all those years ago, will not go gently. He will see his "husband" properly honoured. Tim fights off the encroachments of illness into his sanity and memory. He writes it all down and thereby, just 10 days before his own death, ensures that these two young lovers live on eternally.

## DIRECTORS STATEMENT

I read Tim Conigrave's memoir soon after it was published in 1995. Miraculously, Tim had finished writing it on his deathbed in St Vincent's Hospital in 1994, with his friend and teacher Nick Enright helping him through. I knew Tim a little, but I knew Nick very well - I had just made a television film of Nick's screenplay CORAL ISLAND - and I immediately tried to get the screen rights to Tim's fabulous book. They weren't available, and so I forgot about it.

Seventeen years later Kylie du Fresne and Tommy Murphy asked if I would like to direct the film of HOLDING THE MAN, and I grabbed it.

Not without some dread, I must say. There are huge responsibilities involved in taking on this story. To the power and popularity of the book. To Tim and John themselves, and their many friends alive today. But most of all to Tim's and John's families, still grieving their loss more than twenty years later: how difficult it must be for them to face the idea of their story becoming ever more public.

In telling any story I find a high degree of identification is needed - I'm always digging in my own backyard - but this, more than others, feels utterly personal. I was born four years before Tim, we worked in the same industry, we had friends in common, we had come out to ourselves and then to our families at much the same time, we'd had much the same things said to us in response. But the courage that Tim Conigrave gathered in initiating this relationship at 16 with John Caleo, the determination with which he and John fought for justice and understanding in the face of the panic and grief of the AIDS pandemic, and the strength and dignity with which they both left this world, those things are utterly their own.

And so our film is both intensely private and a kind of public memorial. I hope it's alive to its period without being enslaved by it. I hope that it's open to all the wit, desire, heartache, love and playfulness that Tim and John summoned in the fifteen years of their extraordinary life together. Above all, I hope this is an intimate film - I want us to breathe with the boys and feel that we share the air between them. So that, more than anything, we know what it was like.

**Neil Armfield, June 2015**

## WRITERS STATEMENT – TOMMY MURPHY

When John Caleo's father banned him from seeing his teenage boyfriend, Tim Conigrave, in the late 1970s, the youngsters disobeyed. They ran away. They embraced in the night. Tim blurted out 'Will you marry me?' John laughed and called him a dag. It was an impossible ambition. Tim was embarrassed for saying it and he explained it away as just trying to sound romantic. How times change.

Last month The White House lit up with pride colours following the US Supreme Court's decision to legalise gay marriage. Momentum following Ireland's historic referendum means there might actually be a marriage equality bill before the Australian parliament the week this film hits the screen. Whilst many of us are awash with rainbows on facebook, click to Youtube and some terrifying gay hate attacks are being posted. Nations like Russia and Uganda are legislating to further entrench hatred. Locally some baffling responses to the issue of equal marriage have arisen. It's an extraordinary time to be telling a story about an heroic quest for equality. We didn't predict this would be the context our film would arrive in cinemas.

Tim and John's romance began in a Melbourne playground. Tim was rehearsing for the school play, Romeo and Juliet, and John was the Captain of the footy team - hence the title of Tim's memoir and our film. 'Holding the man' is a transgression in the game of Aussie Rules. It incurs a penalty; in his case an undeserved one.

I first had the privilege of adapting Tim's memoir for the Griffin Theatre Company in 2006. We had the good fortune of seeing that play travel the world, most recently to Los Angeles, with several revivals here in Australia and productions in San Francisco, Auckland and London's West End. I've seen the emphasis shift with each time and place but something always remains; this is a love story. And so it is on screen.

I don't recall the line 'Will you marry me?' standing out in the play but it'll chime a little louder in cinemas this August. That's not deliberate; it's just a happenstance of when the film has been completed after a careful development. This was a patient process of choosing solutions from the rich offerings of Tim's intricate account and beautiful celebration of the life he lived.

It depicts a time we might struggle to comprehend when a terrifying epidemic attacked a generation. It reminds us of today's privilege when we're talking about ending new transmissions in the next five years. We're talking about taking a pill that protects you. We live in a time when developed nations have it within their means to rescue the world's poor from HIV. We've arrived at an extraordinary moment of hope.

The postscript to Tim's book is the reader's realisation that the work is published posthumously. Tim completed the memoir on his deathbed. He died ten days later. Tim didn't know his book would win the United Nations Human Rights Award for Non-Fiction, or that it would be counted among the "100 Favourite Australian Books" by the Australian Society of Authors. It's now a popular Penguin and never out of print the world over. His book transcends its era and boasts an ever-growing fan base. They turn daily to social media to express their amazement at how this book from Australia two decades ago speaks to their own yearnings and love affairs today.

This is the story of two young lovers compelled to live their life to the fullest before time runs out. Passions are intensified. Attempts to thwart their love are urgently resisted. When time does appear to run out for Tim and John, when they have overcome every other challenge to being together forever, and mortality bears the greatest threat, they do survive. Tim writes his memoir, and our star-crossed lovers live on.

**Tommy Murphy, June 2015**

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

### FROM BOOK TO STAGEPLAY TO SCREEN

Acclaimed film and theatre director Neil Armfield (Candy) read *HOLDING THE MAN* when it was first published in 1995. Immediately, he felt compelled to make a film of Timothy Conigrave's moving and often hilarious memoir.

Seventeen years later, with the book now an Orange Penguin Classic, reprinted 15 times in Australia alone and also published in the US, the UK and Europe, and a hit play adapted from the book staged from the West End, to Los Angeles, to Sydney, Neil finally had the chance to make the film he'd always wanted to make.

The power of Tim Conigrave and John Caleo's love story is, Neil says, epic in nature. It's a love story that speaks across generations, cultures and sexuality.

"I now watch the film we've made and I'm so amazed by the tragedy, the drama and the beauty of their story.

"The rejection of Tim by John's family and, while John is dying, the way that all of the forces gather to deny the relationship, to downplay AIDS and, particularly, to relegate Tim to being one of John's friends at the funeral, these events become a creative spur for Tim. The writing of the memoir becomes a kind of essential public monument.

"For an audience, having experienced the love - which you're able to do in such a personal and beautiful way in a film - you feel the injustice of that denial so powerfully. Tim's memoir and therefore the making of the film becomes a way of making their love eternal."

Screenwriter Tommy Murphy also reflects on the power of the story: "One of the things Neil and I discussed early on about the great universals of this love story is that Tim and John give us such a concentrated story of life. There's a tragic aspect to it and many love stories are tragic in that we hold death and love in such close proximity. To love someone is to fear losing them. The power of this story is that it is a story of time running out and the need to hold on to every moment.

“At the same time there was something so special about Tim and John as people, as a couple, so that even those who may disapprove, will appreciate that it is Tim and John destiny to be together forever.”

When Tommy first read the book, he too was enthralled and knew it was material ripe for adaptation. With the play embraced by audiences around the world and with the support of executive producer Cameron Huang, also a huge fan of the material, he then optioned the book and, with the permission of the Conigrave family, began to work on the script.

By this time, Tommy Murphy had already won the 2007 New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards for Best Play and was nominated for Best New Play in the 2010 Broadway World UK Awards, both for HOLDING THE MAN. The book too, as well as becoming an Orange Penguin Classic, had won the United Nations Human Rights Award for Non-Fiction and was listed as one of the '100 Favourite Australian Books' by the Australian Society of Authors on its 40th anniversary in 2003.

When approached by Kylie du Fresne (The Sapphires), partner in leading independent production companies Goalpost Pictures, Tommy embraced the opportunity to have Goalpost bring their influence and experience to spearhead the project.

The success of the source material spoke volumes to Kylie du Fresne. She remembers seeing the stage production for the first time, at Sydney's Belvoir Street Theatre: “I had heard incredible word of mouth about this extraordinary play. I recall sitting in a packed theatre, with a diverse audience: mums, dads, grandparents, the young and groovy. Certainly not just the gay audience I had imagined would attend this production. The audience laughed uproariously then sobbed their hearts out, a sobbing that was guttural and not often something I had seen or experienced in a theatre.”

“I sat in the darkened theatre well after the play was over with a number of other audience members trying to compose ourselves, wondering how we were going to go back out into the world. I was deeply affected by its level of humanity. It is so rare that you are taken through so many levels of emotion in a story.”

Kylie knew one of the lead actors in the play and, through him, immediately contacted playwright Tommy Murphy. Tommy then began working on the script with one of Australia's most experienced Script Editors, Keith Thompson, co-writer of *The Sapphires*.

When the time came to consider directors, Neil Armfield was at the top of both Kylie and Tommy's lists. As well as a screen director of note, Neil is one of Australia's most renowned theatre directors and was, for many years, artistic director of Company B, Belvoir Street. Under Neil's direction, Company B was widely acclaimed as Australia's most creatively exciting and successful stage company. Tommy had been an assistant director to Neil back in drama school and Neil had also directed one of Tommy's later plays.

"Neil is a very, very in-demand theatre and opera director and we knew that he had a schedule that is often booked up to two or three years in advance. But of course he had wanted to make a film of the book since he first read it in 1995 and somehow, almost miraculously, he had the space in his schedule to work with us," Kylie says.

Neil, born just four years before Tim, says it was important that he was able to mine his own personal experiences to bring to his direction of the film: "I am very much of Tim's generation and when I came out to my Mum when I was 18 - who told my dad because that's what she wanted to do - I had a very similar reaction to what we see Tim go through with his parents but similarly a very swift changing of position where they came to accept it and love me early in my adult life. I was very lucky always to feel that love so strongly but there are all sorts of shadows and memories and regrets and longing that I've subconsciously harnessed for this film and it makes it an extremely satisfying thing to be part of."

The lead cast are laudatory in their praise of Neil Armfield and the way he works with actors. For Anthony LaPaglia, Kerry Fox, Guy Pearce and Geoffrey Rush – each a significant international star - the opportunity to work with Neil drew them to the film.

"We'd always imagined that supporting the two lead boys would be a strong and experienced ensemble cast but what we ended up with was incredible, due to Neil's reputation as a director. Actors really

want to work with him because they trust him and they know the quality of his work,” says Kylie du Fresne.

Ryan Corr, who brilliantly plays Tim Conigrave, knew this enormous central role would be challenging at so many levels but, despite never having worked with Neil before, he instinctively felt that he would be safe with Neil as director, as did newcomer Craig Stott.

Ryan says: “I wanted this role because of Neil Armfield. He has had a profound influence of Australia theatre and film. Candy was one of those Australian films I watched as a young man and was amazed by. Neil is a beautiful, intimate and delicate storyteller. As an actor it is a privilege to work with him and exciting to have that opportunity.”

## CASTING TIM AND JOHN

Crucial to success of the film was finding the two lead actors with the to play Tim and John. Neil Armfield, Kylie du Fresne and casting director Nikki Barrett knew that, regardless of superb supporting cast, the film’s success would depend on the chemistry between the two leads actors.

“The audience needs to totally believe that these two boys are in love,” Neil says.

Producer Kylie du Fresne continues: “As filmmakers we were very fortunate as our partners and financiers told us to just to find the absolute best actors we could for the role. And that’s exactly what we did!”

Casting director Nikki Barrett had worked with Neil on Candy and with Kylie du Fresne on The Sapphires. She introduced Ryan Corr (who plays Timothy Conigrave in the film) to Neil very early in the casting and, while Neil recalls that he said ‘that’s Tim’ immediately after seeing Ryan’s screen test, he also knew that there was an enormous and critical challenge in finding the right combination for both lead roles. Craig Stott, who plays John Caleo, was based in Los Angeles during casting. Six months into the casting process, Neil Armfield was in Los Angeles testing a number of young Australian actors. The day before his departure, at lunch at the home of his great friend writer Richard Barrett, Richard suggested Neil ask Craig to test.

“He said ‘he’s got the right eyelashes ...and he’s really good’!

“Nikki reminded me that I’d seen an earlier self-test that Craig had sent us, so I rang him and, before I flew out, he came over and tested again for me, with Anthony LaPaglia who I had already cast as John’s father Bob. Anthony told me how good he thought Craig was too,” Neil explains.

Finally, the decision came down to four actors – two potential Tims and two potential Johns.

Neil continues: “I was in Sydney with Kylie, Tommy and Nikki, Ryan was in Manchester doing *Banished*, Craig was in LA, one of the others was in Perth and the fourth actor was in Amsterdam. None of them had ever tested together and we knew that we couldn’t possibly make a decision without doing that so we took everyone to London for one mad day. We flew straight home to Sydney and screened all the tests on the big screen and all came out very convinced that it was Ryan and Craig.

“The extraordinary thing is that right at the end of the film, when we cut to a photograph of the real Tim and John, the resemblance to Ryan and Craig is remarkable.”

Ryan Corr speaks about working with Craig Stott: “I’ve been profoundly lucky to work with such a dedicated and wonderful partner; who is so innately John and is so dedicated to creating his spirit, as much as I’d like to think I have dedicated to creating Tim’s.

“It’s been so important to all of us working on the film to represent Tim and John accurately and, more broadly, what this story represents. Also, for me, working with Neil Armfield was a huge part of the process. He’s a beautiful, intimate, delicate storyteller and the ability to work with a director like that is a privilege.”

Anthony LaPaglia was the first actor cast in the film, as John’s conservative Italian Catholic father Bob Caleo. He had read the book a number of years ago and re-read it once he knew about the film. He committed immediately, seizing the opportunity to work with Neil Armfield.

Neil says: “One of the other great things about this story is the perfectness of Romeo and Juliet being the play that Tim is in when he first starts courting John. The fact that we’re able to start with that prologue, ‘two households both alike in dignity’ from Romeo and Juliet sits structurally across the film and of course the premature death of the boys is clearly resonate of the premature deaths of Romeo and Juliet. So the sense in which the two households are characterised through Tim and John’s parents has been a very important thing to get right.

Anthony read the script and he loved the complexity of Bob. He’d grown up in an Italian Catholic household in Adelaide and so he knew that world extremely well and also understood that everything that Bob does he does out of love for his son. Anthony was able to portray that idea that however misguided and whatever mistakes are made, they’re mistakes made out of love and its that kind of contradiction that makes it all the more painful and all the more beautiful.

“Tim’s mother, Mary Gert, was clearly the driving energy in the Conigrave house and the opposite was true of the Caleo’s, Bob Caleo was the center of gravity in the Caleo family so that immediately creates, from a balance point of view, quite a clear way of thinking about those two families. Camilla Ah Kin as John’s mother, Lois, is an actress I’ve worked with a number of times in the theatre and brings exactly the right kind of tone. Guy Pearce plays Tim’s father, a gentleman who is adverse to conflict but who will stick up for himself when needed but is here to support the very strong women Mary Gert, played beautifully by Kerry Fox. There’s a great sense of wicked comedy in Mary Gert and you can see in her where Tim got his sense of the bizarre from.”

Producer Kylie du Fresne points to the quality of the script, the heritage of the source material and the regard in which Neil Armfield is held by the acting community as key factors in pulling together such an extraordinary acting ensemble.

“Anthony and Kerry are based overseas and Guy is also away a great deal of the time as a much in demand international actor, so we didn’t know whether any of these actors of such high calibre would want to come to Australia to essentially be supporting cast around the characters of Tim and John. As Neil has said, Anthony committed early, and then Kerry read the script and she loved the material. She

is not on screen for a long time but when she is, she has such a presence and we were blessed to get her. Guy was always on our list and, luckily for us, he was back in Melbourne working on his music album. He told us that he cried when he read the script and that he'd always admired Neil and wanted to work with him. I think everyone felt that this was an important and timely story, and that Australia had yet to tell a great gay love story on screen."

One of Australia's hottest young talents, Sarah Snook, off the back of her virtuoso performance in the film *Predestination*, was signed to play Tim and John's lifelong friend Pepe.

## THE LOOK OF THE FILM

Cinematographer Germain McMicking decided, with Neil Armfield, to shoot with anamorphic lenses: "Essentially it is a *Romeo and Juliet* story, a big love story, and we really wanted to give it something that felt grand and cinematic. We felt our essentially interior story needed something of a grander scale that anamorphic could give to it."

"Neil and I also spoke about our portrayal of the different periods that the film is set in; we were quite aware that we didn't want to make a stark difference between the periods through a distinct camera look or lighting look. We really wanted to feel like we were quite imbedded in the period without it becoming an impression of it.

"There was a thematic in the film in terms of a movement and progression of the camera. Neil wanted a strong sense of movement and push throughout the film and we did that with the camera by constantly move through scenes and created quite a flowing energetic feel."

The real photograph at the end of the film is just one item in a remarkable collection of reference material the Conigrave family and friends of Tim shared with the actors and filmmakers, including an album John created for Tim he was leaving Melbourne for Sydney, to study at NIDA.

While he never met Tim, writer Tommy Murphy has made himself an expert in every aspect of Tim's life: "I've been privileged to meet so many people across the years of the play and the film and the

research, so many people that held Tim and John dear, and there's no doubt that these two guys touched many people's lives. I've read Tim's letters and every sort of artefact that remains in the archive of Tim and John. We have been given extraordinary support to make this film, such as the generosity of Xavier College, the school that Tim and John attended, allowing us to shoot scenes there. That authenticity gives a feeling of being connected to the real Tim and John. And other things like Anna Davison, Tim's sister, contacting us late in production to say; 'you know we've got that telephone' and they had the family telephone from back in the day on her mantle in Adelaide and she flew down to Melbourne nursing it on her lap so that we could use it not as a prop but an artefact. So that means when Tim Conigrave phones John Caleo in our film to say 'will you go round with me' that conversation happens on that the actual telephone. It's an example of the beautiful connection with the ghosts of this story, which I think are alive in the film we have made and have been a really beautiful part of it."

Key to the creative team was evoking the era of the Seventies and Eighties without slavishly following the fashions and design of the period. It was a period that Neil Armfeild says, with a smile, had some, to current tastes, 'shocking fashion choices'.

The film was the first time that Neil had worked with production designer Jo Ford, cinematographer Germain McMicking and hair and make up designer Fiona Rees-Jones, although he and costume designer Alice Babidge had previously worked together in theatre.

"Our film is set across three decades I was very aware that the period of the 70s and 80s, in particular, can throw up an awful lot of landmines so my instinct was that we should always feel like we're there but that it shouldn't scream 'period'. Alice, with her costumes, took us there but in quite a gentle way that is never an overwhelming presence in the film. Similarly Jo, with her fabulous team of set dressers and her art department, worked with a great sense of how far to go and what to avoid. Jo would always say 'what we want the audience to be looking at are the two beautiful faces of those boys', and her design sits behind those performances with a very strong but subtle presence I think. "

Jo Ford continues: "From a design perspective, what the story is about is the two boys and their families' reactions to the boys'

relationship and, later, their illness. As far as texture and tone, first act is at Xavier College, which is a big Catholic school in Melbourne. We took Xavier as a metaphor for Catholicism and of the prevailing attitudes towards homosexuality and the AIDS epidemic. We contrasted Tim's family, who were more accepting of the boy's homosexuality, by creating a world of light and airiness, to John's family who are more traditional, immovable and solid. The environments we created reflected their differing attitudes."

Important to the film is the soundtrack, which will invoke powerful memories for anyone growing up in the 70s, 80s and 90s. "We've had lots of fun rediscovering some gems of the period. We have licensed something like 16 songs with everything from Vivaldi to T Rex to Blondie to Bryan Ferry to the Bronski Beat to Carol Jiani. It's a really interesting and dynamic soundtrack!" Kylie du Fresne says. The film also features a song especially written and performed for the film by Rufus Wainwright, which he agreed to do after seeing an early cut of the film.

Director Neil Armfield talks about the music choices for the film: "The soundtrack for HOLDING THE MAN was always going to be rich in possibility, if only because Tim Conigrave's own listening, recorded in his memoir, covering two decades from the early 70's into the 90's, occurred in such an amazingly fertile period for popular music.

"Working with Alan John as composer, and later with Paul Charlier as music supervisor, we put together song lists of all the music mentioned in his book, as well as a lot of music Tim might have listened to, and these became the soundtrack to my life as I prepared to make the film.

"At first we considered a sound track, à la American Hustle - purely of found popular music. But across the period of the shoot - interrupted as it was for 7 weeks for John's weight loss - and in the edit, it became clear that this was an emotional journey that demanded a rich compositional palette. When Alan gave us Tchaikovsky's Overture to Romeo and Juliet as the music that Chook Hennessy uses to underscore his Xavier production that begins our story, we had the seeds of a harmonic structure and musical frame from which to begin to build."

One of the biggest challenges of the film was to plan for the weight loss experienced by John Caleo in the second half of the film, especially as the John is such a fit and athletic footballer at the beginning of the story. The decision was made to take a seven-week hiatus during production to allow actor Craig Stott to lose the necessary weight, under the careful supervision of a nutritionist.

Producer Kylie du Fresne sought the advice of the producers of the film *Hunger*, for which actor Michael Fassbender had undertaken a dramatic weight loss program.

“Someone recently said to me that the thing about AIDS it that it used to get you where it was most important and for John he was a physical footballer, he was fit, he was an athlete and he wasted away. Tim was a playwright, he was an intellectual and he was a writer and it attacked him in the brain, through toxoplasmosis and eventually dementia,” Kylie says.

## **AT LAST, A LOVE STORY FOR EVERYONE**

The film comes at an important moment in history and its themes have never been more relevant to audiences around the world. In the US, 26 million people on Facebook washed their profile photo with the rainbow flag to celebrate the June 2015 US Supreme Court ruling that same sex couples have the same rights to marriage as heterosexual couples. Just a few weeks earlier, the Irish people voted in favour of same sex marriage. In Tim’s own country, Australia, more than 70% of the population now support marriage equality and the momentum towards legislating for it, seems unstoppable.

Tim Conigrave was an activist. He fought passionately for gay rights and, in the early 1990s, worked as a health promotion officer developing HIV prevention campaigns and providing HIV education and support for young gay men.

Screenwriter Tommy Murphy says he hopes the film will contribute to breaking down the stigma he believes is still attached to HIV/AIDS, despite the tremendous medical advances over the past two decades. He points out that while, in the Western world, people can now live long and productive lives following a diagnosis, that is not

true for many countries. More than 95% of infections are in developing nations, with two thirds in sub-Saharan Africa.

“HIV is a different illness now than it was in in the 80s and early 90s. In our privileged Western World bubble, the advances of science mean we view it in a very different way and the context in which we are telling this story is very different. But there is one constant across the story of HIV and that is stigma - and I hope our film can make any contribution to how communities and individuals respond to HIV.

“The stigma of HIV remains – even in the West - the reason why many people resist being tested. It’s the reason why Governments don’t do enough to help underprivileged nations around the world who are still experiencing HIV as we experienced it in the early 80s, with people are dying untreated and undiagnosed.

“Tim’s response to his own diagnosis was to connect to his community with his social work and community advocacy and of course to be a dedicated lover and carer for John. But Tim’s ultimate act was to write down his story because communication is the best remedy that we have for stigma.

“Its my hope that HOLDING THE MAN honours that history and acknowledges that we stand on the shoulders of people who have fought the battle before.”

It was quite a moment for the filmmakers when they showed the completed film to Tim’s family. For Tommy Murphy it was a profound experience:

“At times when you are writing about real people, you must forget they are real and see them just as characters so that creatively you can be free with what you are trying to shape. But being in that cinema, reminded me the story of Tim and John is about people who really lived and people who faced challenges that are quite unimaginable. The AIDS epidemic happened in my city in living memory. We can forget that very easily and I think that the film honours that history and honours the real lives that were lived.

Tommy Murphy adds: “I think that cinema audiences crave an emotional and enriching experience and HOLDING THE MAN will, I hope, deliver that. There are many different ways people will access

this story. Some people watch as parents, some people will view this story for the nostalgia for the era it is set in, others will come to this as young people still facing the mysteries of adulthood. For other people HOLDING THE MAN will be a portrait of a relationship or, for want of a better word, a marriage over across a long period of time and of all of the trials and conflicts and the beauty of sharing a life with another person.”

For Neil Armfield, it is important that HOLDING THE MAN is not seen as a film about difference, but rather as a film about two young people “who respond to their feelings and act accordingly with great energy and with all the life of their bodies and sexuality.

“It is important that there has been a divide in a sense between gay fiction and straight fiction and it’s been politically useful that there is such category, however its also really important to say that we’re all people and the experience of love is universal. Hence the tag line: A Love Story For Everyone.”

## ABOUT THE CAST

### Ryan Corr as Timothy Conigrave

In 2011 Ryan was the recipient of the prestigious Australians in Film 'Heath Ledger Scholarship' and in 2010 he won the IF 'Out of the Box' award. He has also received Logie nominations in the categories of Most Outstanding New Talent and Most Popular New Male Talent.

Film credits include Russell Crowe’s recent box office hit The Water Diviner; Greg McLean's Wolf Creek 2 which premiered at the Venice Film Festival; Not Suitable For Children, opposite Ryan Kwanten, which saw him nominated for Best Supporting Actor at the 2013 AACTA awards and recipient of the Film Critics Circle Award for Best Supporting Actor, and Spike Jonze's Where the Wild Things Are.

Ryan also starred in the BBC series Banished, penned by Jimmy McGovern, which recently screened in the UK and in Australia. He is currently starring in Cleverman again for Goalpost Pictures.

With several main cast TV credits to his name as a teenager, Ryan went on to study at NIDA and emerged as a stand out graduate of their 2009 year. Other credits include Jimmy in Nine's successful

series Love Child, Michael 'Doc' Kanaan in Underbelly: The Golden Mile, Showtime's Tangle, Redfern Now and The Moodys, both for the ABC, as well as the role of Coby in the Seven Network's hit series Packed to the Rafters.

Ryan made his professional stage debut in 2012 in Sex with Strangers for the Sydney Theatre Company, under the direction of Jocelyn Moorhouse.

## **Craig Stott as John Caleo**

Craig Stott began acting at age 10. His first significant screen role was in the film Macbeth, directed by Geoffrey Wright (Romper Stomper) and starring Sam Worthington.

Craig then featured in the two series of the ABC drama East of Everything, starring Richard Roxburgh, Gia Carides and Susie Porter. Craig has also guest starred in several other television series including McLeod's Daughters and City Homicide (4th season) and had roles in feature films including The Vapor Boys and These Empty Streets which was selected to screen at the 27th International Warsaw Film Festival and The Newport Beach Film Festival 2011). The short film Teenage Lust, in which he starred, was selected to be screened at The Venice Film Festival in 2006.

A passionate activist, Craig is studying Middle Eastern Politics and Immigration Studies at Melbourne University where he is currently based.

## **Anthony LaPaglia as Bob Caleo**

Anthony LaPaglia is a multi-award winning actor who has an extensive and diverse list of credits across film, television and theatre.

As well as HOLDING THE MAN, in 2015 Anthony will be seen in Matthew Saville's A Month Of Sundays, Paul Ashton's This Isn't Funny and Kai Barry's Newcomer.

Anthony's recent projects include the BBC telemovie The Eichmann Show, costarring Martin Freeman, A Good Marriage, based on Stephen King's bestselling novel, PJ Hogan's feature Mental alongside Toni Collette, Big Stone Gap with Ashley Judd and Whoopi

Goldberg and Robert Connolly's telemovie *Underground*, which tells the story of a young Julian Assange.

He also starred in the Australian feature *Balibo* where he also served as Executive Producer. His performance as Roger East in the film earned him the AFI Award and Film Critics Circle of Australia Award for Best Actor.

His other feature film credits include the critically acclaimed *Lantana*, for which he was awarded the AFI Award, IF Award and Film Critics Circle of Australia Award for Best Actor, *Happy Feet Two*, *Legend Of The Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole*, *\$9.99*, *Bitsy's Wedding*, *The House Of Mirth*, *Sweet And Lowdown*, *The Client*, *Company Man*, *Summer Of Sam*, *Autumn In New York*, *Lansky*, *Phoenix*, *Commandments*, *Brilliant Lies*, *Winter Solstice* and *The Architect*.

Anthony received widespread critical acclaim for his portrayal of Jack Malone in *Without A Trace*, for which he won a Golden Globe Award and earned an Emmy Award nomination and two SAG Award nominations for Outstanding Male Actor and a SAG Award nomination for Outstanding Ensemble.

His television credits include a recurring role in *Frasier*, for which he earned an Emmy Award for his portrayal of Daphne's brother Simon Moon, the series *Murder One* and the movies *Never Give Up: The Jimmy V Story*, *Criminal Justice*, for which he received a CableACE nomination, and *Garden Of Redemption*.

Anthony has also appeared on stage in Stanley Tucci's *Lend Me A Tenor* for the Music Box Theatre. He won a Tony Award, Drama Desk Award and Outer Critics Circle Award for his performance in the Arthur Miller classic *A View From The Bridge*. His additional stage credits include *The Rose Tattoo*, which earned him a Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play, the off Broadway productions of *Bouncers*, *Northeast Local* and *On The Open Road* and the Off Broadway production of *The Guys*, which went on to become a feature film in which he starred with Sigourney Weaver.

Anthony was the 2014 recipient of the Virgin Australia Orry Kelly International Award presented by Australians in Film, which recognises his significant international contribution to the Australian film and entertainment industry.

## Kerry Fox as Mary Gert Conigrave

Kerry Fox is one of New Zealand's most internationally respected and awarded actors.

Her most recent film credits include Terry McMahon's *Patrick's Day*, Grant Scicluna's *Downriver* and Jocelyn Moorhouse's feature film, *The Dressmaker* alongside Kate Winslet, Judy Davis, Hugo Weaving and Liam Hemsworth.

Kerry's body of work includes Jane Campion's *An Angel At My table* for which she was awarded the New Zealand Film Award for Best Actress, the San Sebastian Film Festival Award for Best Actress and the Venice Film Festival Elvira Notary Award for Best Performance; Gillian Armstrong's *The Last Day Of Chez Nous* which earned her the Asia-Pacific Film Festival Award for Best Supporting Actress; and Patrice Chereau's *Intimacy* which saw her win the Silver Bear Best Actress Award at the Berlin Film Festival.

She has also starred in Tom Harper's *War Book*, Iain Softley's *Trap For Cinderella*, Andrew Adamson's *Mister Pip*, PJ Hogan's *Mental* alongside Toni Collette, Danny Boyle's *Shallow Grave*, Michael Winterbottom's *Welcome To Sarajevo*, *The Sound Of One Hand Clapping*, *Country Life*, *The Gathering*, *The Hanging Garden*, *Storm*, Jane Campion's *Bright Star* Juan Carlos Fresnadillo's *Intruders* and Jonathan Teplitzky's *Burning Man*.

Kerry has appeared in numerous productions for the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 in the UK including *The Crimson Field*, *Glue*, *Sex And Violence*, *A Village affair*, *Saigon Baby*, *Déjà Vu*, *Sex And Violence*, *Walking The Dead* and *Trial And Retribution* for HBO in the telemovie 'The Affair'. In 2010, Kerry starred in Rowan Joffe's BAFTA Award winning telemovie *The Shooting Of Thomas Hurndall* and in 2011, appeared as Oriel Lamb in the groundbreaking television series *Cloudstreet* based on the novel by Tim Winton.

Kerry trained at The New Zealand Drama School and is an accomplished theatre actress having appeared on stage in Wellington, Sydney and London. More recently, Kerry performed in Andrew Bovell's *Speaking In Tongues* at London's Duke of York's Theatre.

## Guy Pearce

One of the most versatile actors of his generation, Guy Pearce's career has spanned over 25 years in film, television and theatre in Australia and internationally.

Pearce first made his mark in the 80's in the highly successful TV series Neighbours. His work in Australia has been extensive; most recently starring alongside Robert Pattinson in David Michod's The Rover. This was his second time collaborating with Michod after the internationally successful Animal Kingdom with Jackie Weaver, Ben Mendelsohn and Joel Edgerton. Other Australian credits include John Hillcoat's powerful drama The Proposition written by Nick Cave, The Hard Word starring Rachel Griffiths, Pauline Chan's 33 Postcards, In Her Skin, Till Human Voices Wake Us alongside Helena Bonham Carter, the critically acclaimed ABC TV movies Jack Irish directed by Jeffrey Walker and of course Stephan Elliott's Box Office sensation The Adventures Of Priscilla: Queen Of The Desert.

Pearce had his international break in the critically acclaimed L.A Confidential. Starring alongside Kevin Spacey, Russell Crowe and Kim Basinger, the film received 9 Academy Award nominations including Best Picture, 12 BAFTA and 5 Golden Globe nominations. This paved the way for a number of iconic support and leading roles for him including Christopher Nolan's Memento, the Best Picture Oscar winning films The Kings Speech alongside Colin Firth and Geoffrey Rush, and Kathryn Bigelow's The Hurt Locker. Other credits include Iron Man 3, Hateship, Loveship with Kristen Wiig, Ridley Scott's Prometheus, Lawless opposite Tom Hardy and Jessica Chastain, Lockout, Drake Doremus' Breathe In, Don't Be Afraid Of The Dark, Rules Of Engagement, Bedtime Stories, The Road, Traitor, Death Defying Acts with Catherine Zeta Jones, Factory Girl, Two Brothers, The Time Machine, The Count Of Monte Cristo and First Snow.

In 2011 Guy appeared as Monty Beragon in the Todd Haynes adaption of Mildred Pierce for HBO alongside Kate Winslet. His performance was met with critical acclaim winning him an Emmy for Best Supporting Actor.

In 2015 Guy also has slated for release Results with Coby Smulders, and Drake Doremus next feature, Equals with Nicholas Hoult and Kristen Stewart.

## **Camilla Ah Kin as Lois Caleo**

Camilla Ah Kin has worked as an actor for more than 20 years in theatre, film and TV. She is a graduate of WAAPA and studied further with Jacques Lecoq in Paris.

Camilla's theatre credits include: Memory In The Dream Home, The Cherry Orchard, Dinkum Assorted, Boss Of The Pool, Our Town, No Sugar, The Government Inspector, Sailor Beware, Game of Love and Chance, The Visit, Macbeth, The Bear, The Taming Of The Shrew, Family Running For Mr. Whippy, The Flying Doctor, Like Whiskey On The Breath Of A Drunk You Love, The Gap, Pentecost, Milo, Chasing The Dragon, Laughter on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Ship of Fools, Three sisters, Small Poppies, The Night Watchman (2008 Nomination, Best Supporting Actress, Sydney Theatre Awards), Boy Gets Girl, As You Like It, Shafana And Aunt Sarrina, Silent Disco (2013 Jeffrey Joyton Smith Memorial Award, Best Supporting Female Actor & Awarded by The Glugs Theatrical Awards), Romeo and Juliet, The Hansard Monologues and Jump For Jordan.

Camilla's Television credits include: Halifax f.p. Blue Heelers, Murder Call, Going Home, Stories From The Gold, All Saints, Stupid Stupid Man, Tough Nuts: Australia's Hardest Criminals and Rake.

She also works as a director, dramaturge and teacher. She has recently completed her MA (research) with the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney.

## **Sarah Snook as Pepe**

Sarah Snook is one of Australia's most exciting young actresses. Since graduating from the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) in 2008, Sarah has starred in a number of award-winning feature films, theatre productions and television series both locally and internationally. Sarah was recently seen on Australian television in a leading role in the two-part series The Secret River. She received the 2014 AACTA Award for Best Actress for the film Predestination, the 2011 Graham Kennedy Most Outstanding New Talent TV Week Logie

Award for her performance in Sisters Of War; the 2012 AACTA Award for Best Lead Actress in a Television Drama for the ABC series Sisters Of War; the 2013 Film Critics Circle of Australia Award for Best Actress for Not Suitable For Children and she was nominated for Best Lead Actress in a Feature Film at the 2013 AACTA Awards for Not Suitable for Children. She also features in the high profile upcoming films The Dressmaker, directed by Jocelyn Moorehouse, and Danny Boyle's Steve Jobs. Additional film credits include Sleeping Beauty and These Final Hours.

Sarah's television credits include The Moody's, Redfern Now, Spirited Series 2, Blood Brothers, Packed To The Rafters, My Place and All Saints. Sarah also recently filmed the US pilot Clementine for the ABC network.

In 2011 Sarah was runner up for the prestigious Australian's In Film Heath Ledger Scholarship.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

### DIRECTOR – NEIL ARMFIELD

Neil directs for both theatre and film. He was Artistic Director of Belvoir Street Theatre in Sydney from 1994 to 2010. He has directed for all of Australia's state theatre companies, Opera Australia, The Welsh National Opera, The Bregenz Festival in Austria, Zurich Opera, Canadian Opera, Houston Grand Opera, English National Opera, The Lyric Opera in Chicago and the Royal Opera House, London. He was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2007 for service to the arts, nationally and internationally.

Neil is the recipient of two Doctorates of Letters (University of Sydney and UNSW) and many awards including the Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Performing Arts; the Sydney Theatre Critics' Circle Award for Significant Contribution to Theatre; Best Production at Dublin International Festival of the Arts for Cloudstreet; co-winner of the 1998 Barclay's Award in London for Billy Budd and a record six Dora Mavor Awards including Best Production and Outstanding Direction of a Musical in Canada.

Neil's theatrical highlights include Der Damon at the Bregenz Festival; world tour of Cloudstreet; Exit The King on Broadway starring Geoffrey Rush (which won him a Tony Award) and Susan Sarandon; Bliss for Opera Australia including Edinburgh Festival; Billy Budd and Peter Grimes for Houston Grand Opera; Midsummer Night's Dream for Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company and Lyric Opera of Chicago and Der Ring Des Nibelungen (Das Rheingold, Die Walkure, Siegfried, Gotterdammerung) in 2013. Neil revived his production of The Diary Of A Madman in 2010, Belvoir transferring to BAM in New York.

Neil directed the feature film Candy (which he also co-wrote) in 2005, starring Geoffrey Rush, Heath Ledger and Abbie Cornish, which screened in over 20 international film festivals and won an AWGIE and AFI Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. He directed his first film in 1985, Twelfth Night, which was based on his stage production. He went on to direct the television miniseries Edens Lost for ABC in 1988 which won 4 AFI awards including Best Director and Best Mini Series, the feature The Castanet Club (1990) and 2 telemovies for the ABC

TV in 1996, *The Fisherman's Wake*, which won an ATOM Award for Best Original TV Production, and *Coral Island*.

## **PRODUCER – KYLIE DU FRESNE**

Kylie is a long-standing partner at successful production company Goalpost Pictures. She is a leading Australian producer working across both feature films and high-end television drama.

Kylie produced (with Rosemary Blight) Wayne Blair's smash hit *The Sapphires* (2012), co-written by Tony Briggs and Keith Thompson, which premiered at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival and has gone on to break Australian box office records, exceeding \$15m nationally. *The Sapphires* was released in the US through The Weinstein Company and made over \$25m worldwide.

Other producing credits include Rachel Ward's period telemovie *An Accidental Soldier* (2013) for ABC TV starring French Actress Marie Bunel, Bryan Brown and Daniel Speilman, which received 6 AACTA nominations. Kylie also produced 52 episodes of the Tim Winton adaptation *Lockie Leonard* for the Nine Network and BBC. Series 1 won the 2007 Logie Award, AFI and ATOM Award for Best Children's Series, was also nominated for a BAFTA and has sold throughout the world. In 2008 Kylie produced the prime time event telemovie *Scorched* for the Nine Network and ITV International. She was also Executive Producer of Goalpost's tele-feature *Panic At Rock Island*, also for the Nine Network.

Her other drama producing credits include the ABC telemovie *Stepfather Of The Bride* from writer Geoffrey Atherden and the first *Small Claims* telemovie for Network Ten, starring Rebecca Gibney and Claudia Karvan. At the Berlin International Film Festival in 2005, Kylie, with Director Wayne Blair, won the Crystal Bear Award for *The Djarn Djarns*, a half hour drama that went on to screen and garner great acclaim around the world. Together in 2004 Kylie and Wayne made the short film *Black Talk*, which also won many awards, including the Dendy Award for Best Film. She has also produced a number of documentaries.

She is currently Executive Producer on the series *Cleverman* for the ABC and *Red Arrow*.

In 2010, Kylie was an International Jury Member for the Generation section of the 2010 Berlin Film Festival.

## **SCREENWRITER and ASSOCIATE PRODUCER – TOMMY MURPHY**

Tommy Murphy co-wrote Devil's Playground for Foxtel/Showcase (winner Logie Most Outstanding Miniseries or Telemovie and AACTA Best Telefeature or Mini Series).

Tommy is also an award-winning playwright. His stage adaptation of Holding the Man from Timothy Conigrave's memoir (AWGIE, Philip Parsons Award, AussieTheatre.com People's Choice, NSW Premier's Award, ACON Arts and Media Community Award) has had productions every year since its premiere including Adelaide (STCSA), Melbourne (MTC), Sydney (Griffin, Belvoir, Sydney Opera House), Brisbane (La Boite), New Zealand, San Francisco, Los Angeles and London's West End.

Tommy is currently under commission from Black Swan Theatre Company (as winner of the Richard Burton Prize) and for Belvoir.

His adaptation of Lorca's Blood Wedding formed part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad and other plays include Troy's House, Strangers in Between (NSW Premier's Literary Award Winner) and Gwen in Purgatory (WA Premier's Award for Best Play, The Richard Burton Prize).

Tommy is a graduate of NIDA (Director's Course) and has been writer-in-residence at Griffin and Belvoir where he adapted Peter Pan, which transferred to Broadway in 2013.

## **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY - Germain McMicking**

Cinematographer Germain McMicking this year won the special award for cinematography in the world cinema dramatic competition at the Sundance Film Festival for the psychological thriller *Partisan*. His additional film and television credits include the telemovie *An Accidental Soldier*, directed by Rachel Ward and produced by Kylie du Fresne (with Sue Taylor), the series *Wilfred*, John Safran's *Race Relations* and the AFI award winning *John Safran Vs God*, Amiel Courtin Wilson's AFI-nominated feature documentary *Bastardy*, the experimental documentary short *Cicada*, also directed by Amiel Courtin-Wilson selected for Directors Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival, and the AFI nominated feature documentary *Lionel*, which won the Silver Palm award at the Mexico Film Festival 2009.

Germain also has an extensive history shooting music videos and commercial work. His many awards for music videos include the Aria award for 'Music Video Of The Year' in 2001 for Eskimo Joe's *Wake Up*.

## **PRODUCTION DESIGNER - Jo Ford**

Jo Ford is one of Australia's most experienced Production Designers and Art Directors. Jo's film credits include *We of the Never Never*, *Desolation Angels*, *The Quiet Earth* (Winner NZ Film Award Best Production Design), *Hot Target*, *The More Things Change...*, *Rikky and Pete*, *Stranded*, *Last Ride*, *Animal Kingdom* (Nominated AFI Best Production Design 2010), *The Rover* (Nominated AACTA award, Best Production Design 2015) and *Cut Snake*.

Her many television credits include *My Brother Jack* (Nominated Open Craft Award, Television Drama 2001), *The Road from Coorain* (Winner Open Craft Award in Television Drama 2002), *After The Deluge*, *Kidnapped*, *The Glenmore Hob*, *The Society Murders*, *Tripping Over*, *Kick*, *The Time Of Our Lives* and *Gallipoli*.

## **COSTUME DESIGNER - Alice Babidge**

Alice Babidge designs set and costume in theatre, opera and film. In film, Alice has designed costumes for Justin Kurzel's debut feature film, *Snowtown*, which in Official Selection at Cannes Critics Week, and *Reunion* (part of 'The Turning' project) starring Cate Blanchett and Richard Roxburgh and directed by Simon Stone. Her short film credits include *Apricot*, *Castor And Pollux* and *Some Static Started* with director Ben Briand. Alice also designed Briand's MTV drama pilot *Hammer Bay*. She has designed music video clips for The Mess Hall, You Am I, The Vines and End of Fashion.

Alice graduated from the NIDA Design Course in 2004 and quickly established herself on theatre main stages. Alice has worked with Neil Armfield several times on opera productions. In 2013 she designed *The Ring Cycle* costumes for Opera Australia, which was directed by Neil. Her additional set design and costume credits on stage are many including, in 2006, costume design for Barrie Kosky's eight hour epic *The Lost Echo*; in 2009 the costumes for the 4-part adaptation of *The War Of The Roses*; in 2011 the costumes for *Gross Und Klein*; and in 2013 both set and costume design for *The Maids*, all directed by Benedict Andrews. *The Maids* premiered in New York at the Lincoln Centre Festival in August 2014.

## **EDITOR - Dany Cooper**

Dany Cooper has extensive credits and awards for both local and international productions that include three ASE (Australian Screen Editors) Awards, two AFI/AACTA Wins and four-time nominee, FCCA (Film Critics Circle of Australia) Award, IF Nomination and an Emmy Nomination.

Dany won her first ASE Award in 2006 for Neil Armfield's *Candy* (starring Heath Leger and Abbie Cornish). She won her first AFI award in 1994 for the feature *Angel Baby* directed by Michael Rymer, a director she has worked with several times over the years, including on *In Too Deep* (1999), *Perfume* (2001) and *Queen Of The Damned* (2002). She was nominated for an AFI in 1997 on *The Well* (Director Samantha Lang) and her other credits include *Hey Hey It's Esther Blueburger* (starring Toni Collette), *December Boys* (starring Daniel Radcliffe) and additional editing for Baz Luhrman's *Australia*. In 2010, Dany edited *Beneath Hill 60* (director Jeremy Sims) and won both the

FCCA Award and ASE Award, along with receiving her fourth AACTA Nomination. In 2011 her work on Oranges and Sunshine (director Jim Loach, starring Emily Watson and Hugo Weaving), saw her receive the ASE Award for the second year in a row and both IF and AACTA Nominations. Dany edited the box office hit The Sapphires (director Wayne Blair) for Goalpost Pictures, and she received an ASE Award Nomination and won an AACTA Award for her work on the film.

Dany was nominated for a 2004 Emmy Award for her work on the TV miniseries Battlestar Galactica (Universal Pictures). She also worked on Redfern Now, series 1 and 2, Puberty Blues Season 2, and Deadline Gallipoli directed by Michael Rymer for NBCU's Matchbox.

### **HAIR AND MAKEUP DESIGNER - Fiona Rees-Jones**

Fiona Rees-Jones' career in makeup and hair design has spanned more than 30 years. Fiona's many film and television credits include Deadline Gallipoli, The Rover, The Mule, The Boys are Back, December Boys and The Last Ride. In 2000 she received the award for "Best Makeup For a Feature Film" from the Australian Society Of Makeup Artist for her work on the feature film Serenades.

### **COMPOSER - Alan John**

Alan John studied music at the University of Sydney, graduating in 1980. His compositions include original music for various plays, films and TV series.

Alan's film credits include Three Dollars, So Close to Home, The Bank, Twelfth Night, Travelling North, Mother Fish, Missing Water and Looking For Alibrandi. He has also composed for television series, including: Edens Lost, The Eighth Wonder, Dangerous and Cops LAC. Alan also composed for the musical theatre works Jonah Jones, Orlando Rourke and the musical Snuggleput and Cuddlepie for the Sydney Festival 2007 at the Theatre Royal.

His opera, The Eighth Wonder was premiered in 1995 by Opera Australia and was revived in 2000 during the Sydney Olympics Arts Festival.

## SOUNDTRACK NOTES by Neil Armfield

### GLORIA IN D MAJOR BY VIVALDI, SYDNEY PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

This was the first piece of music applied to the film: we tried replacing it with contemporary songs, with other classical tracks, but it wouldn't budge! Its Baroque rhythms are so beautiful to cut to! It surprises us with its confidence and energy, it takes us from Italy back to the wealth and Catholicism of Xavier College, and we land in a schoolboy's mad improvised theatrical world of velvet doublet and hose.

### 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY BOY, T-REX

Glam rock and a different male sexual appearance.

Marc Bolan: Bi-sexual, Jewish... 20th Century boy, I wanna be your toy

### DREAMER, RODGER HODGSON (FROM SUPERTRAMP)

Tim's first attempt to declare his love for John seems to collapse into mistaken intention and humiliation. Supertramp's iconic DREAMER was one of the few tracks Tommy Murphy specified in the screenplay, and Roger Hodgson's searing tone mocks Tim's earnest romantic strategies.

### THIS TIME, DRAGON

There was a fair bit of argument about whether Tim would have admitted to enjoying a band whose lead singer (Marc Hunter) infamously shouted, "You're all faggots!" at an audience in Texas in 1988. Two years earlier though, this Australian band's debut single was everywhere, and even today its naïve optimism and aspirational harmonic hooks make it a nostalgic dance floor filler.

### BECAUSE I LOVE YOU, THE MASTERS APPRENTICES

A rare thing in being both an Australian love song and a song of its time. And Holding the Man is fundamentally a love story set in a changing time.

### I FEEL LOVE, BRONSKI BEAT

Initially we used the original Donna Summer 1977 version but we loved the shift to a male voice, and how the energy of this song transferred from Giorgio Moroder's electronic rhythm of the original into Jimmy Somerville's blasting falsetto.

Jimmy Somerville, interviewed in *The Quietus*, March 2015: "They are all iconic gay songs and part of gay history. What I wanted to do was to take them away from the women who sang them. It was time to take these songs and have them sung by a gay man for gay men."

#### (WE DON'T NEED THIS) FASCIST GROOVE THANG, BRITISH ELECTRONIC FOUNDATION

By 1981 my circle of ex-Sydney Uni Dramatic Society/NIDA friends had probably moved on from their faux working class dress code (bib and brace overalls with flannelette shirts or nothing underneath). British synth-pop band Heaven 17 may have influenced the decision: here were hip, snappily dressed young men who could still pen lyrics describing Ronald Reagan as a "fascist god in motion".

This remix, released by their alter ego British Electric Foundation, was available "on cassette only". Such forward thinking.

#### DREAMING, BLONDIE

Basically inspired by having the album cover in shot - Tim's departing gift to his younger sister Anna whose wedding we later see in the film. We love the abrupt opening of the song, turning on a knife edge, its energy and joy, the duet of rolling drums and Deborah Harry's voice.

#### HIT N RUN LOVER, CAROL JIANI

An enormous number of songs were fed through the discos & nightclubs of the 70s and 80s. Those that are chiefly remembered are the few that have been most often chosen to represent that period. We wanted to find a song that didn't stand out too much.... but still 'spoke' to the scene

*I was waitin' for my life to change  
He was goin' much too fast  
When he suddenly touched me  
It felt so right  
But he sped off away  
In the middle of the night*

### QUASIMODO'S DREAM , DAVE MASON (THE REELS)

The Reels played the Union Theatre at Sydney University when composer Alan John and I were there in 1979 and we were determined to find a place for Dave's inimitable, heartbreaking voice in the film. Dave Mason could never put his finger on exactly what his song was all about but "love won't annihilate hatred" is an unfortunate lesson that Tim learns early on.

### HOMOSAPIEN (DUB), PETE SHELLEY

An iconic song, banned by the BBC, and instantly recognisable. So recognisable in fact that we loved the way Shelly's own dub version teases out the opening of the song in an unexpected way.

### (DON'T FEAR) THE REAPER, BLUE ÖYSTER CULT

Another iconic song whose opening guitar riff immediately pulls you back into a period of time. This song ties together three streams of our story: a love story of outsiders..... Romeo and Juliet and finally a reference specific to Australia and not intended in the song - our Grim Reaper campaign where "Don't fear the reaper" upholds the hope and optimism that drives the boys.

### FOREVER AND A YEAR, RUFUS WAINWRIGHT

With only one line of dialogue this scene of Tim and John's final lovemaking is one of the reasons the film exists. Editor Dany Cooper first cut it to Sinéad O'Connor's NOTHING COMPARES TO YOU, but in spite of its beauty the song was too present. Rufus Wainwright watched the scene and he developed the idea of a song based on the conversation in Schubert's DEATH AND THE MAIDEN. Two lovers, one a realist and one an optimist, speak of their fear and hope as their world darkens.

### TOO FAR GONE, KAARIN FAIRFAX AND THE WIKIMEN

A lovely tune made famous by Tammy Wynette and afterward by Emmy-Lou Harris and even Elvis Costello, but for a bridal waltz? Singer Kaarin Fairfax went to primary school with Tim Conigrave and remained a close friend until the end of his life, so it was moving to hear her resurrect this song in Tim's honour. Dan Witton's western swing outfit The Wikimen are an ideal wedding band, regardless of era.

## IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER

Harold Darke's beautiful setting of Christina Rossetti's Christmas poem, written in 1909 has become a staple in the annual Carols from King's College Cambridge. The choir's "If I were a wise man I would do my part/Yet what I can, I give him/Give my heart" quietly underscores John's promise that he will not die without Tim by his side.

## LET'S STICK TOGETHER, BRYAN FERRY

"The first present you ever gave me was wrapped in Essendon colours: Bryan Ferry's LET'S STICK TOGETHER...You said you saw him on Countdown and he made you feel a bit sweaty." This song holds our story from the first moments of their love to the last. Its energy and optimism perfectly counter the tragedy of John's and Tim's deaths, reminding us of the enduring triumph of their love.

## LOVE'S GONNA BRING YOU HOME, THE ROCKMELONS AND DOUG WILLIAMS

Raymond Medhurst and Bryon Jones were cutting edge pop culture gurus for us in terrace house lounge rooms in late 70s Surry Hills. We were thrilled when they formed a real band, The Rockmelons that was on Countdown! Our last song on the film is a love story set to their hypnotic, sparse and sensual deep house style.

## SCORE (by Alan John)

Romeo and Juliet references abound in the film, not least of which in the score which weaves in motifs and harmonic progressions from the opening pages of Tchaikovsky's Fantasy Overture. The instrumental palette (piano, celesta, tuned percussion, strings and subtle shimmering electric guitar work from Carl Dewhurst) is inspired by the light on the water in the Lipari scenes that bookend the film. Danny Weltlinger's sweet soulful and sometimes wry violin solos speak to the joy, pain and humour of the story.

## KEY CAST

Ryan Corr as Timothy Conigrave

Craig Stott as John Caleo

Kerry Fox as Mary Gert Conigrave

Camilla Ah Kin as Lois Caleo

Sarah Snook as Pepe Trevor

with

Guy Pearce as Dick Conigrave

and

Anthony LaPaglia as Bob Caleo

## THE FILMMAKERS

Directed by Neil Armfield

Produced by Kylie du Fresne

Screenplay by Tommy Murphy

Based on the book Holding The Man by Timothy Conigrave

Executive Producer Cameron Huang

Executive Producers Rosemary Blight and Ben Grant

Executive Producer Tristan Whalley

Executive Producers Andrew Mackie and Richard Payten

Associate Producer Tommy Murphy

Director of Photography Germain McMicking

Editor Dany Cooper ASE

Composer Alan John

Production Designer Jo Ford

Costume Designer Alice Babidge

Hair and Make Up Designer Fiona Rees-Jones

Casting Nikki Barrett CSA, Natalie Wall

Line Producer Esther Rodewald

1st Assistant Director Margie Beattie

Sound Supervisor William Ward

Sound Designer Robert Mackenzie

Music Editor and Supervisor Paul Charlier

Music Supervisor Gary Seeger

Script Editor Keith Thompson

CAST  
(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Tim Conigrave	Ryan Corr
Pepe Trevor	Sarah Snook
Italian Waiter	Francesco Ferdinandi
John Caleo	Craig Stott
Eric	Lee Cormie
Drama Teacher	David Woods
Prue	Pia-Grace Moon
Gina	Tegan Higginbotham
Derge	Joshua Burton
Father Wallbridge	Andrew S. Gilbert
Paul Caleo (15 years)	Mason Viola

Bob Caleo	Anthony LaPaglia
Lois Caleo	Camilla Ah Kin
Chris Caleo (13 years)	Luke Christopoulos
Mary Gert Conigrave	Kerry Fox
Dick Conigrave	Guy Pearce

Prologue Student	Christian Impala
Biscuit	Thomas Hatchman
Mr. O'Connell	Tony Rickards
Student Reader	Brodie Derrick
Father O'Malley	Brian Lipson
Anthony Caleo (5 years)	Zac Mineo
Michael Caleo	Santo Tripodi
Old Digger in Car	Ronald Falk
Anna Conigrave	Tessa De Josselin
Nick Conigrave (14 years)	Caleb McClure

Richard	Luke Mullins
Albion St. Doctor	Mitchell Butel
Andrew	Jacob Collins-Levy
Veronica	Ngaire Dawn Fair

Librarian in Lift	Kerry Walker
Woody	Nick Masters
Peter Craig	Tom Hobbs
Alison	Debbie Zukerman
Alan	Charlie Le
Ian	Tim Kano
Lee	Gareth Trew
Rose	Brigid Gallacher
Anthony Caleo (9 years)	Jordan Hindi

Pub Owner	Adam Morgan
Trevor the Barman	Trevor Ashley
Helen the Barman	John Leary
Man in Nightclub	Kazim Kane
Young Dancer	Thomas Armfield
Bedfellow	Barton Welch

Barry	Geoffrey Rush
Doreen Hogan	Jane Menelaus
Nick Enright	Peter Paltos
Brett	Kevin Kiernan-Molloy
Drag Queens	Polly Petrie
	Babara Tabbara
	Fox
Kissing Men in Pool	Adam Tierney
	Con Patsalas

Woman from Red Cross	Rebecca Massey
Aunty Gae	Julie Forsyth
Aunty Mary	Kris McQuade
Nick Conigrave	Alex Given
Groom	Nicholas Denton
Wedding Band Singer	Kaarin Fairfax
Wedding Band	Nara Demasson
	Justin Marshall
	Jenny Thomas

Renato Vacirca  
Dan Witton

Pleurodesis Doctor	Marco Chiappi
Pleurodesis Nurse	Maria Theodorakis
Doctor Sam	Marcus Graham
Man with Drip	David Cail
Man Shouting in Bed	Gary Wilson
Male Nurse	Glenn Quick
Man in Bed	David Menadue
Father Woods	Paul Goddard

ADDITIONAL

CAST

Old Man in Doorway	Bartolo Lo Presti
Men on Seat	Francesco Carbonaro
	Francesco D'Ambra
Soccer Boys	Paolo Mezzapica
	Omar Salavatore Belletti
	Fabrizio Abilerti
VFL Umpire	Steve Kretiuk
Drama Student Assistant	Jackson Cannon
Romeo & Juliet Cast	Layne Ellis
Member	
Brett's Girlfriend	Stefanie Blundell
Stage Manager	Camille Saunders-Browne
Sauna Men	Brian Emerson
	Oliver Wilkinson
	Rowan Howard
AIDS Patients	Harley Forthergill
	Max Viney
	Malachi Grimsley
	Sheron Lau
Sister	Jo James
Father of AIDS Patient	Phillip Lau
Mother of AIDS Patient	Angela Lau

Anthony Caleo	Robert Tripolino
Paul Caleo	Steen Raskopoulos
Chris Caleo	Daniel Di Giovanni

Italian Receptionist	Rosaria Greco
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### STUNT PERFORMERS

John Stunt Double	Lachlan Ward
Footballers	Beau Karolos
	Will Jones
Bar Patrons	Bryce Hardy
	Siros Niaros
	Chris Weir
	Harley Durst

### LOOP GROUP

Adult Loop Group	Aaron Tsindos
	Andrew Cutcliffe
	Briony Williams
	Megan Drury
Teenage Loop Group	John Kennedy
	Charlie Vaux
	Declan Curtain
	Ben Legrand
	Matt McElroy
	Arthur Gallagher
	Sam Rigney
	Scott Newey
	Lachlan Ryan
	Hughie Flannery
	Declan Beattie
	Louise Arnott
Child Loop Group	Ben Ward
	Audrey Ward

## ADDITIONAL CREW

2nd Assistant Director	Andrew Pante
3rd Assistant Directors	Tom Hooper Greg Tynan
Additional Assistant Directors	Kara Masters  Kristan Dowsing Michael McLean Nathan Hart
ADG / Screen Australia Director's Attachment	Ariel Martin
Assistant Director's Attachment	Emma Martin
Production Coordinators	Serena Gattuso Amanda Wray
Production Secretaries	Lynnette Lai Melanie Rowland
Production Runners	Nathan Williams Joel Roche
Production Assistant	Elizabeth Mitchell
Goalpost Office Coordinator	Milli Howson
Goalpost Production Assistant	Sarah Christie
Steadicam / 2nd Camera Operators	Dan Maxwell  Matt Kearney
1st Assistant Camera Focus Puller	Chris Child Kevin Campbell
2nd Assistant Camera	Michelle Marchant Simon Walsh Joel Eames Karina Davies
Video Split Operators	Karin Christensen Nick Forster
Camera Luggage	Adam Parkinson
1st Assistant, 2nd Camera Camera Attachment	Chris Healy Michael Filocamo

Art Director	Mandi Bialek-Wester
Set Decorator	Rolland Pike
Art Department Coordinators	Sharon Young
Set Dressers	Paula Salini Jeff Sturm Trevor Purvis
Prop Masters	Marney McKenna
Props Buyer	Sophie Durham
Standby Props	Dean Sullivan
Art Department Runners	Ely Harrison Oliver Ramsey
Art Department Assistants	David Short Das Patterson Kitty Taube
Art Department Casuals	Tammy Knox Jack Vigor Jodie Olde Mark Lightbourne
Art Department Attachments	Samantha Howson Joel West
On Set Projectionist	Hanna Chetwin
Graphics	Jason Parkinson Anna McEwan
Drafting	Phoebe Smith
Construction	Ben Corless Chris Vance
Scenic Artist	Janine Marshall
Set Painter	Chris Heath
Vehicle Coordinators	Steve Mahoney Jason Chapman Lon Lucini
Vehicle Wranglers	Dion Holden Elrico Cattaneo Christian Cook

Costume Supervisor	Rachel Nott
Associate Costume Supervisor	Sophie Fletcher
Costume Standby	Julie Barton
Assistant Costume Standby	Gabrielle Dunnmoore
Assistant Costume Standby	Elizabeth Watson
	Helen Croatto
Costume Buyers	Stephanie Hooke
	Sarah Carr
Additional Costume	Barbara Pinn
Costume Assistant	Alice Muston
Wardrobe Assistant	Ella Bradshaw
Key Hair & Makeup Artist	Lynn Wheeler
Hair & Makeup Artist	Gail Kane
	Maggie Kolev
Additional Hair / Makeup Artist	Danni McDowell
	Carolyn Nott
	Zeljka Stanin
Prosthetics	Larry Van Duyhoven
Location Managers	Nicci Dillon
	Peter Muston
On-Set Locations	Barry Hall
Location Manager - Sydney	Anton Denby
Unit Managers	Mark Barlow
	Toby Granger
Unit	Ben Selleck
	Tom Wright
	Maurice Kerr
	Clay Dunn
	Daniel Mathew
	Brendan O'Grady
	Adam Jacobs
	Robert Ambler
Additional Unit	Graham Connolly

	Victor Fukushima
Gaffers	Adam Hunter Ruru Reedy
Gaffer - Sydney	Moses Fotofili
Best Boy Electrics	Shylo Tui
Electrics	Ray Pritchett Chris Mitskinis Lee Clafferty Jack Gow
Additional Electrics	Brecan Mitchell Shane Mowday
Lighting Assistant	Jack Kenneally
Key Grips	Luke Stone Richard Allardice
Best Boy Grips	Darryl Murphy Edward Barlow
Best Boy Grip - Sydney	Rowan Peacock
Grips	Martin Fargher Dion Caramalis Jo McAvenna Tim Delaney Tyron Robinson Lincoln Hunt
Additional Grips	John Regan Sam Allardice
Sound Recordist	Bart Bee Mark Cornish
Sound Recordist - Sydney	Mark Blackwell
Boom Operators	Dan Lustri Jen Sutcliffe Nicole Lazaroff Helen McGrath
Radios	Simoco Australasia P/L, Rebecca Ross
Script Supervisor	Paul Kiely
Script Clearance Research	Indieclear, Carol Compton

Production Accountant Patrick Nicholls  
Assistant Accountant Kim-Anh Huynh  
Post Production Accountant Money Penny, Jill Hewitt

Extras Casting Gabrielle Healy  
Tamasin Simpkin  
Additional Extras Casting Madeleine Gottlieb

Choreographer Gideon Obarzanek  
Assistant Choreographer Jessica Prince

Medical Consultant Dr Edwina Wright  
Dietician for Mr Stott Marieke Rodenstein  
Unit Nurses Libbie Evans  
Johanna Pollitt

Stunt Coordinator Brett Anderson  
Safety Supervisors Tom Coltrane  
Siros Niaros  
Safety Officer Brian Ellison

Caterers Hel's Kitchen  
Fringe Benefit

Camera Equipment Panavision  
supplied by  
Camera Equipment Lipari Panalight Roma, Carlo  
supplied by Loreti

Lipari Production Services Mediamaxfilms Ltd  
Provided by  
Mediamax Films Production Michele Petternella  
Manager  
Location Manager Francesco D'Ambra  
Transportation Alessandro Marchese  
Simone Di Stefano  
Props Giancarlo Pulea  
1st Assistant Camera Martino Tagliaferri  
2nd Assistant Camera Francesco Pera

Sound Recordist	Stefano Varini
Gaffer	Giovanni Deidda
Boat Support	Orazio Groppo
Lifeguard	Francesco Rossi
Data Wrangler	Sandro Magliano
Italian Casting	FAC S.R.L Franco Alberto Cucchini

For Goalpost Film	
Legal Services	Nicki Parfitt
Production Executive	Jessie Mangum

Publicist	Tracey Mair, TM Publicity
Publicity Assistant	Rachel White
Stills Photography	Ben King Sarah Enticknap Simon Cardwell
EPK	Andrew Sugarman

Additional Editor	Nick Meyers ASE
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