

# THE SOUNDING

Winner of over 25 Awards and Nominations

**Directed by**

CATHERINE EATON

**Written by**

CATHERINE EATON & BRYAN DELANEY

**STARRING**

TEDDY SEARS

HARRIS YULIN

ERIN DARKE

FRANKIE FAISON

CATHERINE EATON

DANNY BURSTEIN

Running time: 93 mins | World Premiere

Genre: Mystery - Drama

THEATRICAL DISTRIBUTION

myCinema by Nagra

DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

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Princ Films

**ALL INQUIRIES - [thesoundingfilm@gmail.com](mailto:thesoundingfilm@gmail.com)**

**Liv, after years of silence, begins to weave a language out of Shakespeare's words as she fights for her voice and her freedom.**

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## AWARDS

Winner - Festival Grand Prize - Santa Fe Film Festival

Winner - Festival Grand Prize - Arizona Int'l FF

Winner - Festival Grand Prize - YES Fest

Winner - Best Cinematography - Woodstock FF

Winner - Best Narrative Feature Film - Jury Award - Stony Brook FF

Winner - Best Narrative Feature Film - Jury Award - Minneapolis St Paul IFF

Winner - Best Narrative Feature Film - Jury Award - Palm Beach IFF

Winner - Best Narrative Feature Film - Audience Choice - Brooklyn FF

Winner - Best Film of the Festival - Audience Choice - Naples FF

Winner - Best Film of the Festival - Audience Choice - Maine IFF

Winner - Best Acting Award (Catherine Eaton as Liv) - Manchester IFF

Winner - Lisa Blount Memorial Acting Award (Catherine Eaton as Liv) - Oxford Film Festival

Winner - Best New Voice / Style Award - Brooklyn FF

Winner - New American Visions Audience Award - Minneapolis St Paul IFF

Winner - Special Recognition for a Narrative Feature - Oxford Film Festival

Industry Nomination - Voice Award sponsored by DGA, WGA, PGA, SAG/AFTRA, Humanitas for films that champion the marginalized.

Nomination - Best International Feature Film - Galway Film Fleadh

Jury Nomination - Best Actor Award, Catherine Eaton - Napa Valley Film Festival

Jury Nomination - Best Screenplay, Best Lead Actress, Best Feature Film - Hell's Half Mile

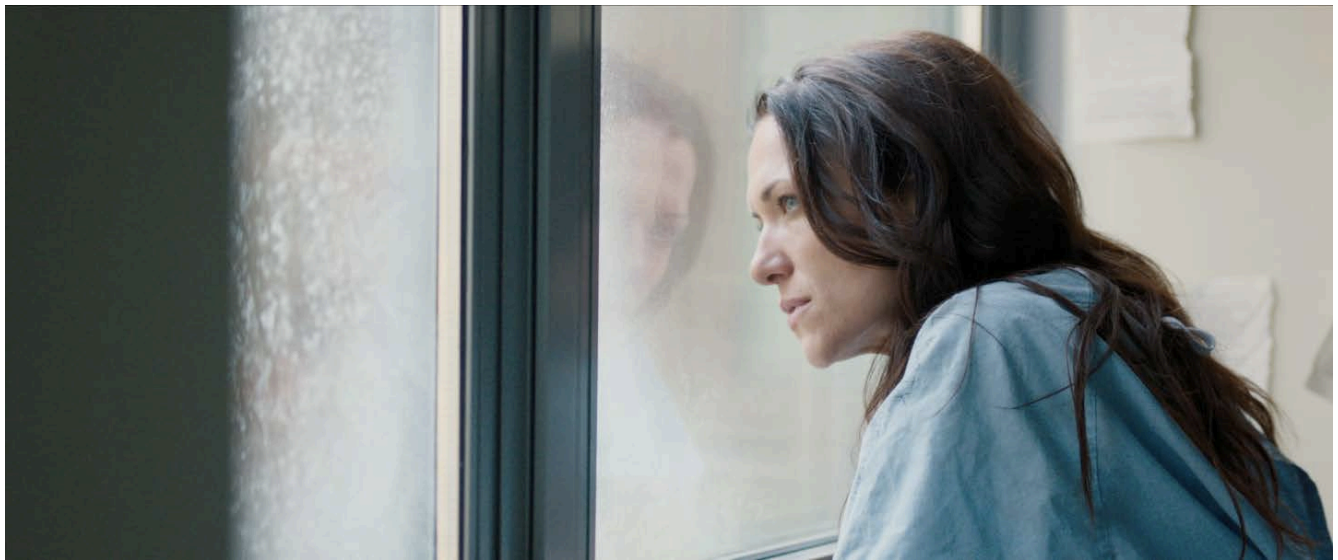
Runner Up - Tribeca IWC \$50K Finishing Fund

Opening Night Film - Maine IFF

Opening Night Film - Harvard University Harvard University - new screening series celebrating the new Creative Writing MFA (Harvard has since requested we screen there again this summer)

Closing Night Film - Santa Fe Film Festival

Closing Night Film - Denver Film Festival Women + Film



# STORY

## Short Synopsis:

On a remote island off the coast of Maine, Liv, after years of silence, begins to weave a language out of Shakespeare's words. A driven neurologist, brought to the island to protect her, commits her to a psychiatric hospital. She becomes a full-blown rebel in the hospital; her increasing violence threatens to keep her locked up for life as she fights for her voice and her freedom. At a tipping point for otherness in our current climate, THE SOUNDING champions it.

## Full Synopsis:

Raised on a remote island by her grandfather Lionel, Liv has never spoken. When Lionel (Harris Yulin) discovers he's dying, he calls the son of his best friend and a former protégé, Michael (Teddy Sears), to the island and asks him to protect Liv's independence alongside Lionel's attorney (Frankie Faison). That night, as Lionel is reading to Liv, his voice fails him. Liv picks up the book of Shakespeare and begins: first reading, then weaving a language from Shakespeare's words. She is committed to a psychiatric hospital and becomes a full-blown rebel in the hospital; her increasing violence threatens to keep her locked up for life. At a tipping point for otherness in our current climate, THE SOUNDING champions it.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

With Liv in *THE SOUNDING*, I wanted to create a character – an outlier – with an extraordinarily strong life force and explore what happens when this life force comes into conflict with society's expectations. I think we're all drawn to people with out-sized needs; we all want to play with the gloves off.

In Liv's case, the battleground is something as fundamental as language, but that serves as a stand in for every unique impulse any of us have ever felt and been unsure what price we may pay for following it.

Language is at the heart of everything we do. It defines cultural boundaries, class systems, artistic endeavors. It is our primary means of communication and therefore how we connect to each other. Society depends on language. If language is willfully subverted by an individual, what are the repercussions? Why would someone choose this path?

The use of language in the film is unconventional: it's a deconstructionist revision of the most baroque and expressive common "language" many of us in the West have: Shakespeare. Unpacked and reconceived, Liv uses it to live more authentically, as a veil between her actions and her words.

But ultimately, at it's core, this is a film about otherness, about empathy as a courageous act, about love and loss and life. The film stands as a tale of revolt against any system of oppression. Like Henry's speech in *Henry V*, this is a battle cry for the oppressed.

- Catherine Eaton



*“Director, co-writer and star Eaton superbly crafts an unforgettable tale about humanity, about embracing those who are marginalized, and about how we should always strive to be something more... something extraordinary.”*

*- Michael Rabehl, Director of Programming, Cinequest Film Festival*

## **A CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR | CO-WRITER | ACTOR CATHERINE EATON**

### **Why does this film matter? Why now?**

This is a film that is ultimately about otherness, at a time when we desperately need to connect and include the marginalized.

It's a film about mental illness at a time when in the United States alone our dependence on anti-depressants has more than doubled in the past ten years, and 42.3 million people suffer from some form of mental illness today (one in five).

It's a film inspired by Oliver Sacks' humanity and curiosity about the mind, and Shakespeare's insights into the human condition.

And it's made by women, about a woman's journey. It tells the compelling story of an extraordinary woman who dares to live her own authentic life. At a tipping point for the voice and freedom of all those who are “othered” – this film encapsulates that zeitgeist.

### **What is the origin story behind the film?**

THE SOUNDING is my first feature, with a great New York discovery story behind it: before I began directing, I was a professional stage actor (Broadway, Lincoln Center, Public, Guthrie, etc), and I wrote a play for myself about a woman who takes on an acquired language woven from Shakespeare's words, and then fights for her right to speak as she chooses.

I played the show at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center and in Europe, and - here's where it gets good - also in this unique glassed-in space in Manhattan on 47th and Lexington where the sound is piped out onto the street and thousands of pedestrians have the option to stop and watch, or walk on by. The Artistic Director of the space was a close friend and had asked me for a year to perform it there, but I had refused because I thought the show was too intimate to command a NYC street corner.

The show became a kind of cult-hit. The police had to come, the sidewalks were overcrowded, traffic backed up at the light. The homeless came banging on the glass, wanting to free Liv. Stockbrokers stood in old phone booths in the rain. Pizza delivery guys let their pizzas

got cold as they chatted to each other in Spanish about the girl in the glass box speaking Shakespeare.

And every day a man came in a tuxedo – with his family or alone – always carrying a peach colored newspaper under his arm, *The Financial Times*. The guys in the back jokingly called him "the financier" (despite my certainty he was caterer – who else wears a tuxedo every day?).

After the final performance, "the financier" waited for me afterwards, warmly shook my hand and said "I want to turn your play into a feature film." He became a major investor in the project, a champion of the film overall, and changed my life and creative trajectory.

### **Where did the character of Liv come from?**

A few years ago when I was living in LA, I got a call that my mother had been injured and that I needed to return home to Vermont to take care of her. Three days later I found myself in rural backwoods and the only work available while I was helping her recover was on the grounds of a farm so I rolled up my sleeves, laced up my boots, and learned. And I did this for six months, long days, no creative outlet, little conversation.

One night I came home late, covered in mud and muck, and needed to be surrounded by language and beauty. So I took out my *Complete Works of Shakespeare* and methodically began tearing out pages and hanging them on the walls.

By morning, the house was covered. My mom? Understandably concerned. But this was the genesis of the character of Liv at the heart of *THE SOUNDING*. I went to the farm that day as every day, worked in the dirt, spoke less, listened more, and came home wondering about someone who might choose to use Shakespeare's words instead of normal language, if she spoke at all.

Language is at the heart of everything we do. Society depends on it. But language is imperfect - subject to interpretation, circumstances, boundaries, "alternative facts." What happens to someone like Liv, who has the immense courage to willingly choose individual authenticity over society's demands?

### **You've spoken about the theme of "Otherness," being a crucial element of the film. Can you talk more about that?**

It's really the central question of the film: what is the value and/or threat inherent in otherness (or difference)? *THE SOUNDING* is about a woman defending her own extreme form of otherness, with that specific otherness standing in for marginalization and difference as a whole. I see her difference – and her fight to be valued for it – as a stand-in for the value of all forms of difference and diversity. The film asks us to consider what happens if we not only

include difference, but embrace it. So I see the film as asking questions that relate to marginalization as a whole, while exploring one very unique example.

THE SOUNDING is a film that advocates for inclusion both in front of and behind the camera. This is a powerful story about otherness and being one's authentic self, and now more than ever, we need stories that add to the conversation rather than cheapen or reduce it.

### **Tell us about the locations?**

THE SOUNDING Team traveled hundreds of miles to capture the locations for the film. Cast and crew braved the cold and the sea as we shot on the remote island of Monhegan, twelve miles out to sea off the coast of Maine. The island gave incredible support and the sheer raw beauty necessary to lend Liv's world it's own narrative voice. We absorbed the solitude and splendor of a monastery on Long Island's North Shore still run by monks (some of whom appear in the film). We gently incorporated history while shooting in a disused psychiatric ward on Roosevelt Island in New York City. The use of these varied locations and authentic locations is intended to give a level of honesty to THE SOUNDING that reflects Liv's own.

### **How did you get the rights to Milck's song "(I Can't Keep) Quiet?"**

"(I Can't Keep) Quiet" has become the unofficial anthem of the women's march and the voice of the disenfranchised. I heard the song after the march when it went viral online and knew we had to find a way to have it, though there was no way we could afford the song at this point. We were very lucky that literally hours before sending the film off to print, Milck's team generously granted us the rights to this version – sung by Milck and a 1300-person choir – after realizing how strongly the message of the song and the themes of the film connected.



*"Why did I take on this project? Shakespeare was in the center of the story and he's in the center of me. And... there was Catherine, with whom, in the beginning I was positively taken and now am lost in admiration and affection."*

- Harris Yulin, Actor, Role of Lionel

## **CAST CREDITS**

TEDDY SEARS as Michael (*24 Legacy, The Flash, Masters of Sex, American Horror Story, Curve, Raising the Bar*)

HARRIS YULIN as Lionel (*Ozark, Training Day, Scarface, Fur, Clear and Present Danger, Place Beyond the Pines, Ghostbusters 2, Oppenheimer Strategies*)

FRANKIE FAISON as Roland (*The Wire, Banshee, The Village, The Good Wife, Adam, Silence of the Lambs* trilogy)

ERIN DARKE as Christine (*The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, Dietland, Good Girls Revolt, Love & Mercy, Kill Your Darlings, Still Alice*)

LUCY OWEN as Joan (*Miss Sloan* (with Jessica Chastain, upcoming), *Ricki and the Flash, Billions, The Mend, Kelly & Cal, Elementary, The Good Wife*)

DANNY BURSTEIN as Dr. Anderson (Starred in *Fiddler on Broadway, Boardwalk Empire, Blackhat, Transamerica, Affluenza, The Family Fang*, 5-time Tony Nominee, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards Winner, Grammy Nominee)

DAVID FURR as Ed Knott (TONY and drama desk nominations for Broadway's *Noises Off, Odd Mom Out, Braindead, Royal Pains, Elementary*)

*"Thematically it was so wonderful and multi-layered - it stuck with me. I had to meet the mind that gave birth to this story, which led to a somewhat obsessive hounding of the writer/director/actor/all-around badass Catherine Eaton, a fantastic filmmaker who is no doubt here to stay."*

- Teddy Sears, Actor, Role of Michael





## CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

CATHERINE EATON (director / writer / role of Liv)

Catherine Eaton's feature debut as a director and writer, *THE SOUNDING*, starring Harris Yulin (*Training Day*, *Ozark*) and Frankie Faison (*The Wire*, *Silence of the Lambs*), has won two-dozen awards on the festival circuit (including four Festival Grand Prizes) and just sold to HBO Europe for international release, MyCinema for theatrical release, and Giant Pictures for North American digital release. Catherine and *THE SOUNDING* are the subject of a branded mini-doc by Stella Artois running on Hulu. Catherine was chosen for Tribeca Film Festival's prestigious "Through Her Lens" Lab and Grant for emerging female directors, and was selected as a Shadowing Director for Show Runner Ryan Murphy's Half Program on the hit Fox show *9-1-1*. Her newest pilot script *BREAKING NEWS* – based on her personal experience working with freelance news crews in conflict zones – was selected for IFP's Project Forum and is currently a finalist for the Screenwriter's Colony. Catherine shares an Emmy with the production team on "The Human Toll of Ethanol" for Bloomberg TV, and did freelance production work for various news crews for five years. As an actor, she's been seen on Broadway, TV and film, and is currently nominated for a Helen Hayes Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role. Catherine teaches Screenwriting at Harvard University. She has an undergraduate degree in International Law from Cornell University and an MFA from the Univ of MN / Guthrie. Her father is from Paraguay, and her mother is French-American.

CAITLIN GOLD (producer)

Caitlin is an independent producer and founder of the New York-based development and production company, Tanbark Pictures. She has produced award-winning features including *Imagine I'm Beautiful* and the upcoming *Inez Doug & Kira*, starring Michel Chernus and Tawny Cypress. Other producing credits include *'79 Parts*, starring Eric Roberts and Sandra Bernhard, *In This Our Youth*, starring Jared Gillman of *Moonrise Kingdom*, and *Indigo*, starring Nicholas Brendon of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

She is also the founder of The 51 Fund, a new private equity fund dedicated to financing female-helmed narrative feature films. Previously, Caitlin served as Head of Acquisitions at boutique distribution company, Candy Factory Films, where she acquired titles for theatrical and digital release. She later went on to serve as Head of Acquisitions at the crowdfunding and streaming platform Seed&Spark, where she acquired over 100 titles for release, focusing on films and series from underrepresented creators.

#### JESSICA VALE (producer)

JESSICA VALE is an accomplished producer/director/editor in NYC. Recent credits include Joe Berlinger's documentary series "Wrong Man" (STARZ) and "Jonestown: Terror in the Jungle" (AMC/Sundance Channel) executive Produced by Leonardo DiCaprio. Her feature directorial debut was "Small Small Thing: The Olivia Zinnah Story" which opened at The Quad Cinema in NYC to rave reviews from the NY Times. Its worldwide television premiere was on Al Jazeera English. The film won over 12 festival awards and the film was a One World Media Award finalist. She has two upcoming features in the works: "Radical" - a documentary series about female extremists, and "Division Street" - a film about childhood magic and acceptance on New York's Lower East Side. Radical was in IFP's 2018 Screen Forward labs. In her past life as a musician, she sang and co-wrote two Billboard charting dance singles.

#### BRYAN DELANEY (producer / co-writer)

Bryan is an Irish playwright and screenwriter based in New York. From 2010 to 2014 he ran the New Playwrights Programme at The Abbey Theatre, Ireland's national theatre. He is a producer and the co-screenwriter of the narrative feature film, The Sounding (winner of several awards on the U.S. festival circuit, including multiple festival grand prizes, jury best feature awards, audience best feature awards and a cinematography award from Academy Award nominee Ellen Kuras). His TV pilot Jordan (co-written with Daniel Dowling) was one of the selected scripts in the BAFTA Roccliffe TV Drama Awards and was chosen for the BAFTA Forum List. He has several TV shows currently in development. Stage plays include The Seedbed (winner Theater Masters/Aspen Institute Visionary Playwright Award; nominated for James Tait Black Prize for Drama; nominated for L. Arnold Weissberger Award); The Onion Game (winner King's Cross New Writing Award, London; winner BBC Writersroom competition, London); The Cobbler (Katherine Cornell Award; joint winner 16th International Playwriting Competition); The Bohemians (Carnegie Hall, New York). Other awards include two playwright's bursaries from The Peggy Ramsay Foundation, two travel awards and an artist's bursary from The Arts Council of Ireland. He was also awarded the Samuel Beckett Centenary International Writer's Residency at the Irish Cultural Centre in Paris. Bryan has taught screenwriting, writing for TV and playwriting at Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania and on the Fordham University/Primary Stages MFA in Playwriting.

## DAVID KRUTA (director of photography)

An award-winning Director of Photography and the son of Czech political refugees, David Kruta has worked internationally shooting narrative and documentary feature films, short films, commercials, fashion and music videos. He is the visual architect behind the 2013 Sundance Competing feature film *Concussion* starring Robin Weigert (*Deadwood*) and Maggie Siff (*Sons of Anarchy*), 2014 Lower East Side Film Festival Audience Award Winner *Sidewalk Traffic*, starring Samm Levine (*Freaks & Geeks*, *Inglorious Basterds*) and Heather Matarazzo (*The Devil's Advocate*), and most recently was an International Cinematographer's Guild Emerging Cinematographer Award Winner two years in a row for *Lullaby* (2015) and *Wallace* (2014), starring Dallas Roberts (*The Walking Dead*, *The Grey*) and Paul Sparks (*House of Cards*, *Boardwalk Empire*). He was also the Camera Operator on James Franco's *Black Dog*, *Red Dog*. David has shot for an extensive list of clients including Porsche, Mizuno, Canon, Gillette, Starbucks, Sony, Amtrak, Bose and Saturday Night Live.

## MARCO PEREZ (editor)

Marco Perez began his career in his native Rome and has since cut all over the world, building a fan base of filmmakers in America, London, Cape Town, and across Europe. Perez studied film at Rome's Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, then began work as a commercial editor for directors Wim Wenders, Spike Lee, Joel Schumacher, and Ellen Kuras, among others. He has recently been named a partner at the bi-coastal post-production house Union Editorial, known for its editors' heavy involvement in feature film.

In features, Marco cut *X/Y* (America Ferrera), nominated for a TFF Best Narrative Feature Award, and released nationally. He is finalizing the edit on *You Can't Win* starring Michael Pitt and Jeremy Alan White (*Shameless*), and cut the documentary *Uncertain* which won the Maysles Documentary Award at TFF 2015. He is attached to edit Michael Pitt's directorial debut feature after cutting his short *The Driver* earlier this year.

## SIDDHARTHA KHOSLA (composer)

Siddhartha Khosla is a film and television composer and frontman, multi-instrumentalist and songwriter for critically acclaimed band Goldspot. Goldspot has released three albums and has been featured on TV shows (most notably *'How I Met Your Mother'*, *'The OC'*, *'The Neighbors'*), major brand advertising campaigns (Google, Target, Apple), and films (*Basmati Blues* w/ Donald Sutherland and Brie Larson, *Today's Special* w/ Aasif Mandvi). Sidd's songs have also appeared in trailers for *How Do You Know* (Reese Witherspoon), *The Dilemma* (Vince Vaughn), and *Something Borrowed* (Kate Hudson). Sidd's recent composing credits include the Hulu hit show *"This is Us"* for which he won a BMI Television Award, Lionsgate drama *"The Royals"* (Elizabeth Hurley), ABC's *"The Neighbors"* (Dan Fogelman, EP) and *"Grandfathered"* on Fox.

Sidd was invited as the musical guest for First Lady Michelle Obama's Diwali celebration at the White House. Sidd's band has shared the bill with Arcade Fire, Bjork, Death Cab for Cutie, Franz Ferdinand, and Feist. Sidd is managed by Steve Nice (Nice Management & Consulting) and represented by WME.

#### ROCIO GIMENEZ (production designer)

Born and raised in Argentina, Rocio is an Art Director and Production Designer based in NYC. With an intense passion for film and the fine arts, Rocio has worked in different mediums including paint, photography and, most recently, animation. After attending filmmaking at the National Institute of Art in Buenos Aires, she has studied cinematography and worked extensively with music videos, commercials, short and feature films.

#### DEBORAH RAYNE (associate producer / role of Hannah)

Founder of Rainy Day Productions, Deborah and her company love to champion original works. Rainy Day has developed several world premiere stage plays (*Spirits of Exit Eleven*, *Chasing the River*, *Reparation*) and is now committed to bringing exciting, original cinematic projects to life.

#### REBECCA SKLOOT (executive producer)

Rebecca Skloot is an best selling author of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, which is being translated into more than twenty languages, and adapted into a young adult book, and an HBO film produced by Oprah Winfrey and Alan Ball. Her book was a New York Times Best Seller, won the Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize and the Wellcome Trust Book Prize, and was named The Best Book of 2010 by Amazon.com, and a Best Book of the Year by Entertainment Weekly; O, The Oprah Magazine; The New York Times; Washington Post; US News & World Report; and numerous others. Skloot is also a science writer whose articles have appeared in The New York Times Magazine; O, The Oprah Magazine; Discover; and others. She has worked as a correspondent for NPR's Radiolab and PBS's NOVA scienceNOW, and is a contributing editor at Popular Science magazine and guest editor of The Best American Science Writing 2011. She is a former Vice President of the National Book Critics Circle and has taught creative nonfiction and science journalism at the University of Memphis, the University of Pittsburgh, and New York University. She has been featured on numerous television shows, including CBS Sunday Morning and The Colbert Report.

## BRAXTON POPE (executive producer)

Braxton Pope is a producer who maintains a production deal with Lionsgate. His newest film *The Trust* starring Academy Award winner Nicolas Cage and Elijah Wood is premiering at SXSW 2016. Pope produced *The Canyons* directed by Paul Schrader, starring Lindsay Lohan. The film generated national press because of the innovative way in which it was produced, and was released theatrically by IFC.

Braxton produced the Lionsgate feature *Shrink* starring Kevin Spacey and Robin Williams which premiered at Sundance and was released nationally. He produced Toronto Film Festival selection *The Take*, nominated for an Independent Spirit Award, which Sony Pictures acquired. He Executive Produced *Pete Smalls is Dead* starring Tim Roth, Steve Buscemi and Peter Dinklage. He produced the feature *The Bondage* (SXSW), *Penny Dreadful*, MGM's *Hit and Run*, and *Hirokin* starring Wes Bentley released by Lionsgate. He has also Executive Produced television pilots for Showtime and FX.

## BARDEN / SCHNEE CASTING (casting directors)

Recent credits: *August Osage County* starring Meryl Streep, Julia Roberts, Chris Cooper, Juliette Lewis, and Abigail Breslin; *Prisoners* starring Hugh Jackman; *Dallas Buyers Club*; DreamWorks' picture *The Help*, the winner of the 2012 SAG Award for Best Ensemble Cast starring Viola Davis, Octavia Spencer, Jessica Chastain, Allison Janney, Emma Stone, and Bryce Dallas Howard; as well as the Sundance Grand Jury-Prize winner *Winter's Bone*, which received the 2010 Gotham Award for Outstanding Ensemble Cast; *Damsels in Distress* (Venice Film Festival), directed by Whit Stillman and featuring Greta Gerwig, Adam Brody, Analeigh Tipton, and Aubrey Plaza.



## **CREDITS**

directed by  
Catherine Eaton

written by  
Catherine Eaton & Bryan Delaney

starring  
Teddy Sears, Harris Yulin, Erin Darke, Frankie Faison, Catherine Eaton

casting by  
Kerry Barden & Paul Schnee

produced by  
Caitlin Gold & Jessica Vale

produced by  
Bryan Delaney, Catherine Eaton, Aliko Paraschis, Veronique Huyghebaert

co-produced by  
Deborah Rayne

director of photography  
David Kruta

music by  
Siddhartha Khosla

edited by  
Marco Perez

additional editing by  
Jennifer Honn & Andrew Ford

production designer  
Rocio Gimenez

costume designer  
Caitlin Conci

executive producers  
David Knott, Rebecca Skloot, Bruno Lyra,  
Braxton Pope, Steven East, Jonathan Marc Davidoff, Stavroula Toska  
\*for complete credit list, please visit [thesoundingfilm.com](http://thesoundingfilm.com)

