



THE SOUNDING

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

AWARDS

2017 Festival
Grand Prize:
Arizona Int'l FF

2017 Best Feature
Audience Choice:
Brooklyn FF

2017 Best MN
Made Feature:
Mpls St Paul Int'l
FF

2017 Best Feature
Award: Palm
Beach Int'l FF

2017 New
American Visions
Audience Choice
Award

2017 Best Style /
New Voice
Award: Brooklyn
FF

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STORY

Logline:

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

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.

Very much a film of two halves – the first half, with a wild visual languor, versus the man-made dictated hospital of the second half – providing strong visual counterpoint and reinforcing the liminal space between nature and the uniquely human struggle to control it. My DP David

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Kruta and I worked with subjective camera. The camera is not objective; it isn't impartial. It is a human perspective on a human story.

Ultimately, why did I have to make this film? I believe that at its core, this is a story that needs to be told – about the marginalized, about empathy as a courageous act, about the power of listening to something more than what is being said.

- 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.

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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 get 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

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

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

ERIN DARKE as Christine (*Amazon's 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 is a director, writer, actor and producer. Most recently, she directed, co-wrote and performed in her debut feature *THE SOUNDING* starring Harris Yulin (*Training Day*), Teddy Sears (*24:Legacy*), and Erin Darke (*Good Girls Revolt*) premiering in 2017, based on her short film starring Frankie Faison (*The Wire*, *Luke Cage*).

She is developing two original series for television, both finalists for the Sundance Labs. Her pilot, *ON THE OUTS*, has been awarded the Tribeca Enterprises "Through Her Lens" 2016 Award. Catherine was just selected to participate in Ryan Murphy's Half Foundation program for directors. She is a free-lance producer and shares an Emmy for Bloomberg's investigative report "The Human Toll of Ethanol." As an actor, Catherine has performed on Broadway,

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across the country and on screen.

Catherine has a BA from Cornell, an MFA from Univ of MN/Guthrie, has lectured on directing at Harvard, is on the leadership team of Film Fatales and a member of NYWIFT, SAG/AFTRA, and AEA.

CAITLIN GOLD (producer)

Caitlin Gold is the Co-Founder of New York-based production company, Nine Lives Pictures. Caitlin has produced numerous films including *Imagine I'm Beautiful* (currently on iTunes, Amazon, and Google Play), the upcoming *In This Our Youth* (starring Jared Gillman of *Moonrise Kingdom*), *'79 Parts* (with Eric Roberts and Sandra Bernhard), and *Indigo* (with Nicholas Brendon of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*). As producer, Caitlin is actively involved at all stages of production, from script development, packaging, and financing, all the way through post-production, marketing, and distribution.

Previously, Caitlin served as Head of Acquisitions at the boutique distribution company, Candy Factory Films. At Candy Factory, she was responsible for acquiring over twenty films for release including Sarah Adina Smith's *The Midnight Swim*, Eddie Mullins' *Doomsdays*, and the WGA-nominated documentary, *Being Canadian*, starring Mike Meyers, Seth Rogan, Cobie Smulders, Ben Stiller, Kim Cattrall, and Catherine O'Hara. Following Candy Factory, Caitlin went on to work at Lionsgate where she managed home entertainment sales and distribution of the company's new release and catalogue titles. Currently, she oversees acquisitions and programming at Seed&Spark, a crowdfunded studio dedicated to delivering sustainability to artists and diversity to audiences. She is also a founder of The 51 Fund, a new venture capital fund financing films written, produced, and directed by women.

JESSICA VALE (producer)

Jessica Vale is an accomplished producer, director, and editor based in NYC. Originally from New Hope, Pennsylvania, Jess graduated from the film program at Temple University. Her credits include work for NBC News, The Weinstein Co., and most recently "America Divided" for EPIX, created by Norman Lear, Shonda Rhimes and Common.

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 and Village Voice. Its worldwide television premiere was on Al Jazeera English. Jessica received substantial media attention including appearances on MSNBC's Melissa Harris Perry Show, Huffington Post Live and WABC NY's Weekend Morning Show. The film was also a One World Media Award finalist. She is currently working on her next feature documentary "The Limits of Dissent" about former Weather Underground radical Judith Clark.

BRYAN DELANEY (producer / co-writer)

Bryan Delaney is a screenwriter and playwright. The pilot script for his original TV drama series *Jordan* (co-created with Daniel Dowling) was selected as a BAFTA TV Drama Forum List winner, and is currently in development. Bryan is a winner of the BBC Writersroom Competition to develop new TV scripts for the BBC. Bryan ran the New Playwrights Program at The Abbey Theatre, Ireland's national theatre. His plays have been performed across Ireland, the U.K. and the U.S.A. Works include *The Seedbed* (winner Aspen Institute/Theater Masters Visionary Playwright Award); *The Onion Game* (New York Stage and Film); *The Cobbler* (Katherine Cornell Award) and *The Bohemians* (Carnegie Hall). Other awards include multiple grants from The Arts Council of Ireland and the Samuel Beckett Centenary Writer's Residency in Paris. Bryan has taught scriptwriting and television writing at Harvard University, U.Penn, and Fordham University. He is based in NYC.

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, Alike 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

