

George Ryga's HUNGRY HILLS

The award-winning novel **HUNGRY HILLS** by legendary Canadian author George Ryga has been adapted for the screen by Vancouver-based screenwriter Gary Fisher and began principal photography in and around Regina, Saskatchewan on April 27, 2009 under the helm of director Rob King.

The rolling hills of Saskatchewan's Qu'Appelle Valley provided the setting for Ryga's story of a young man's desperate attempts to overcome poverty and discrimination.

Ryga's timeless story of perseverance and redemption has been a sixteen-year journey for screenwriter Gary Fisher, a dream shared by award-winning director Rob King (*Moccasin Flats: Redemption, Something More*) who has championed the project alongside Fisher for the last decade.

George Ryga's HUNGRY HILLS stars Keir Gilchrist (*United States of Tara*), Alexander De Jordy (*Sticks and Stones, True Heroes*), John Pyper-Ferguson (*Brothers & Sisters, Everest*), Gabrielle Rose (*Grace, Mothers & Daughters*), Alexia Fast (*Kaya, Left Coast*) and Cavan Cunningham (*Just Friends, Corner Gas*).

Rhonda Baker (*Dolan's Cadillac, Ticket Out, The Messengers*), Avi Federgreen (*One Week; Leslie, My Name is Evil*), Rob King and Gary Fisher produced the feature-length film.

Jennifer Jonas (*Leslie, My Name Is Evil, All Hat*) and Leonard Farlinger (*Monkey Warfare, The Perfect Son*) of New Real Films, and Gerard Demaer of Gerard Productions Inc. served as executive producers.

SYNOPSIS

In 1954 after two years in a home for boys, Snit Mandolin (Keir Gilchrist), 15, returns home to his seemingly unhinged and reclusive aunt Matilda (Gabrielle Rose). Defeated by a community that still shuns him, confronted by the impossibility of surviving on his aunt's farm, Snit falls in with Johnny Swift (Alexander De Jordy), 16, another outcast.

Johnny makes moonshine and sells it through a local bootlegger. The boys work together and become fast friends. And Snit finds first love with a free-spirited local girl, Robin, 16 (Alexia Fast).

Their adventure is interrupted by the enigmatic and unpredictable Roy Kane (John Pyper-Ferguson), the district's private cop, who took Snit away two years ago and will now use the boys to get to the bootlegger.

Dogged by Kane, betrayed by a bootlegger and plagued by the ghosts of the past, the boys' partnership ends – their friendship broken.

Alone once more in the community that rejected him, Snit comes to a violent crossroads.

ABOUT GEORGE RYGA

Born in Deep Creek, a remote Ukrainian community in the Athabasca region of northern Alberta, George Ryga is a founding father of Canadian literature, theatre and culture. The harsh realities of his upbringing – an unforgiving landscape, poverty, and isolation – are recurring themes in his work.

Largely self-taught, he published his first book of poetry in his late teens and garnered accolades in 1967 with the premiere of a play that is perhaps his most famous work, *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*.

Throughout his career, Ryga criticized social issues in Canada through an austere examination of his characters, becoming an outspoken champion for the underprivileged.

Known for his stark rural settings and a recognizable array of colourful, characters, all of whom take us in many pleasurable, disturbing and revealing directions, Ryga offers readers characters with opportunities for redemption, survival and self-determination.

“All of Ryga’s plays and novels were propelled by compassion and moral outrage,” noted the *Globe & Mail*, “but also by a peculiar and personal awareness of the life and death of human cultures and the values they contain.”

One of his early novels, ***HUNGRY HILLS*** examines the role of the disaffected in the mainstream consciousness of Canadian society by dramatizing the effects of isolation and the condition and psychology of stigmatized individuals in the face of societal neglect.

In enduring the prejudice and isolation his community has imposed upon him, and by insisting on his right to inclusion within that society, Snit Mandolin speaks for everyone who has suffered injustice at the hands of society-at-large. His journey is one of heart-breaking discovery and the heroics of simple survival that mirror the life of the author himself.

Though unapologetically Canadian in their location and circumstance, the central themes in Ryga’s work address the general human condition and speak to audiences around the world.

“George Ryga has taken the human experience, which in this case is only Canadian by accident of destiny, distilled it through his fine sense of compassion and given it to us...as an act of communion in which our own participation is inescapable,” said Ben Metcalfe of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

George Ryga died in 1985 in Summerland, British Columbia. In 1996 the George Ryga Centre Society was established in Ryga’s former home in Summerland, where it functions as a cultural centre in memory of the author’s contribution to Canadian culture.

The centre has hosted writers such as Sandra Birdsell (*The Ruslander, The Two-Headed Calf*) and supports the annual George Ryga Award for Societal Awareness in Literature, granted to a writer who has achieved an outstanding degree of social awareness in a new book publication.

George Ryga is remembered as one of Canada’s most prolific and powerful writers. His relevance to this day is confirmed by the fact that *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* was running at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa while the feature film adaptation of his novel ***Hungry Hills*** was in production in Regina, SK.

The novel is currently collected in the volume *George Ryga: The Prairie Novels* (Talonbooks)

ABOUT HUNGRY HILLS - THE FILM

It is no surprise that screenwriter Gary Fisher saw the potential for an adaptation of the short novel as his third screenplay. He began passionately pursuing the possibility of making a feature length film of ***HUNGRY HILLS*** more than 16 years ago and eventually took the script to Saskatchewan and director Rob King.

Their perseverance resulted in a partnership between the pair and producer Rhonda Baker. When Avi Federgreen met the director and read the script he immediately recognized its potential and was brought into the fold. Shortly thereafter executive producers Jennifer Jonas and Leonard Farlinger, and finally the indispensable Gerard Demaer, were brought on board to complete the team.

Their labour of love saw production of the feature-length film begin in Saskatchewan in April 2009 with Rob King at the creative helm. Not unlike the adversity faced by the characters in the story, the cast and crew braved inclement prairie weather and the inevitable budgetary constraints encountered in filming, with the end results exceeding not only viewer expectations but the expectations of the creators themselves.

THE RED CAMERA

In an effort to stretch the budget as far as possible, the film was shot without the use of celluloid film. The majority of the film is shot on exterior sets, that are stylistically crucial to the storyline. The RED camera allowed the director and cinematographer to define detail in the progressing physical darkness of the film dictated by the script.

The unconventional RED camera is a relatively new technology, first introduced four years ago by Oakley founder Jim Jannard and is taking the film and television industry by storm.

HUNGRY HILLS is one of only a handful of feature films to be shot in Canada exclusively employing RED technology, which means no actual film was used in the process. The RED camera captures images that are transferred to hard-drive on set, thereby increasing production value and simplifying the post-production process.

“For me, this is Year Zero; I feel like I should call up Film on the phone and say, ‘I’ve met someone,’” commented famed cinematographer/director Stephen Soderbergh (Traffic, Ocean’s Eleven) at red.com.

Though as a digital imaging device the RED records on a different media, it operates like a traditional film camera allowing the cinematographer the speed, mobility and agility to capture and define the story through the lens.

Cinematographer Ken Krawczyk (who incidentally worked on the first feature film to use the RED camera exclusively) consulted with director Rob King before they decided to employ the new technology exclusively in the making of the film.

THE CAST

Casting was another primary challenge when shooting an ambitious character-driven feature film with limited financial resources. Award-winning casting directors John Buchan, Jason Knight, and Carmen Kotyk, aligned their talents to assemble an unparalleled cast of industry veterans and newcomers who were compelled by the potential of Gary Fisher’s script and Rob King’s vision for the film.

Cast in the lead role of Snit Mandolin, **KEIR GILCHRIST** was born in London, England and moved with his family to Boston and then New York before settling in Toronto, which he currently calls home. He has taken drama classes since he was very young and it was with the encouragement of a Toronto drama teacher, who arranged a meeting with her agent, that he first began acting professionally.

He currently stars in the critically acclaimed Showtime series *United States of Tara* (Toni Collette, John Corbett) from executive producer Steven Spielberg and creator Diablo Cody (*Juno*).

Keir starred in the Fox Television series *The Winner* opposite Rob Corddry and has made many memorable guest appearances on shows including *The Family Guy* and *The Listener*. He can also be seen in the title role of Peck in the feature film *Just Peck*. His other film credits include *The Egg Factory* and *Dead Silence*.

Keir and his classmate **ALEXANDER DE JORDY** auditioned for **HUNGRY HILLS** together in Toronto, – an opportunity that prompted them to produce a comedic short documentary of their experiences for a school project. The documentary had a Hollywood ending when Alex was cast alongside Keir in the role of Johnny Swift.

Born and raised in Toronto, Alexander caught the acting bug in grade school while attending Royal St. George's College where he played the Pauper in the school's 2003 production of the *Prince and the Pauper*. He was also a ranked competitive junior tennis player over a six-year period (2001 – 2006) competing provincially by age nine and nationally by age eleven.

In 2006, Alexander developed a temporary knee condition requiring him to take a break from high-level tennis competition. This turned out to be a great opportunity for him to focus on his acting career and venture into the world of film and television.

Alex has appeared in *True Heroes* (Discovery Channel) and *The Good Witch* (Hallmark) but he is best known for the lead role he played in the 2008 Gemini Award-nominated CTV series *Sticks and Stones*, winner of Best Foreign Drama Feature at the 2008 International Family Film Festival in Los Angeles.

Today at 16, Alexander is totally committed to an acting career but still hits the gym and tennis courts and has most recently become a yoga enthusiast.

Veteran actor **JOHN PYPER-FERGUSON** was cast opposite Keir and Alex as the community-paid private policeman Roy Kane.

Born in Australia, Pyper, as his friends call him, lived there only a short time before moving to Canada where he was raised.

Pyper has worked extensively in theatre, film and on television. He has appeared in more than 36 films, most recently in Dominic Laurence James production *Die*. His credits include Brett Ratner's *X-Men 3*, Andy Fickman's film *She's The Man*, *Bird on a Wire* starring Goldie Hawn and Mel Gibson, Clint Eastwood's *The Unforgiven*, *Frank and Jessie* starring Bill Paxton, *Somebody is Waiting* starring Gabriel Byrne and Nastassja Kinski, *For Richer or Poorer*

alongside Tim Allen and Kirstie Alley, Adrienne Shelley's *I'll Take You There* and in Bruce MacDonald's cult hit *Hard Core Logo*.

Pyper's most recent television work was on *Flashpoint*. He has guest starred on *The L Word*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Cold Cast*, *Fear Itself*, *The Handler*, *Family Law*, *Judging Amy*, *The Guardian*, *ER*, *Gideon's Crossing* and *CSI*. He has also appeared in Chris Carter's *X-Files*, *Harsh Realm* and *Millennium*. Other credits include *Arli\$\$*, *Outer Limits*, *Walker: Texas Ranger*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Nash Bridges*, *MacGyver* and *21 Jump Street*.

He was nominated for a Gemini Award for his work on the series *The Highlander*.

Pyper starred in the mini-series *The Tempest* opposite Peter Fonda and was the Warlord in the MOW *The Warlord*. Never one to shy away from a challenge Pyper climbed mountains in the television movie *Everest* and road horses and chuck wagons in the mini-series *Into the West*.

He has been a series regular in *Brothers and Sisters* and the popular *Briscoe County*, and had recurring roles in the series' *Cane*, *Night Stalker*, *Killer Instinct* and *Jeremiah*.

Pyper graduated with distinction from the University of Alberta with a bachelor of fine arts in performance. He loves to sing and play the guitar.

GABRIELLE ROSE plays Snit's tormented aunt Matilda Mandolin.

An acclaimed and award-winning Canadian actor, Gabrielle is currently starring in a lead role in the comedic drama *Mothers and Daughters* which opened to enthusiastic theatre audiences in May 2009.

Gabrielle also played a lead role in the genre feature *Grace* - a disturbing, psychological horror film directed by Paul Solet. *Grace* is enjoying success on the film festival circuit and will open theatrically in later 2009. Gabrielle attended the premiere of the film at Sundance, where it and she received excellent reviews – and it is rumoured that two grown men passed out in the audience (by all accounts a first for the festival). The film recently won the Jury Prize at the Gerardmer Festival du Fantastique in France.

Gabrielle's career accomplishments were recently honoured with an induction into the BC Entertainment Hall of Fame. In honour of British Columbians who have excelled in their chosen entertainment field throughout BC, across Canada and internationally, Gabrielle's plaque will be permanently mounted in the Starwalk on the Granville Street sidewalks of Theatre Row later this year.

Her critically acclaimed work includes an extensive list of credits in film, television and theatre. Her impressive list of film credits include: *The Sweet Hereafter*, *The Rhino Brothers*, *The Adjuster*, *Speaking Parts*, *Family Viewing*, *The Five Senses*,

Sisters, and the recently wrapped feature film *Excited* directed by Bruce Sweeney.

On television, her credits include series recurring roles in *Robson Arms*, *Three Moons Over Milford*, *Jake and the Kid* and *Exes and Ohs* and has starred in *Taken*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Sanctuary*, *Tom Stone*, *Win Again*, *Milgaard*, *The Sleep Room*, *X-Files*, *Beggars and Choosers*, *Shattered* and many more. Gabrielle received a Leo Award for her role in *The Mob Princess* and won a 2009 Leo Award for Best Guest Performance by a Female in a Dramatic Series for her role in *Sanctuary*.

Gabrielle has served on the board of Vancouver Women in Film and conducted several workshops there with Peg Campbell, one of which was developed by Carol Whiteman into the highly successful Women in the Director's chair. She is passionately committed to Canadian film, television and theatre.

ALEXIA FAST rounds out the teenaged cast in the role of Robin, Snit's confidante and love-interest.

At age 7, Alexia penned her first professional format script in purple ink. Her efforts garnered the attention of the local digital filmmaking society who workshopped her script before providing her equipment so she could complete the project. She designed storyboards for her shots, directed the camera operator and assembled make-up and wardrobe before engaging an editor to deliver the final product. *The Red Bridge* has screened at the 2002 Atlantic Film Festival and in 2007 at the *Reel to Reel Festival* in Vancouver.

By age 12 she had segued into acting with credits such as *Fido* (Carrie Anne Moss, Billy Connelly), *Supernatural*, *4400* and *Past Tense* for which she received the 2007 Leo Award for best female lead actor in a feature film.

Alexia danced her way to a co-starring role in the feature film *Kickin' It Old Skool* and grew her resume with roles in *Wildfires*, *Masters of Science Fiction*, *I Scream..We All Scream for Ice Scream*, *Tin Man*, *Sara Paxton*, *Kaya*, *Helen*, *Gym Teacher*, *Triple Dog* and *The Cult*.

She was cast as lead in a CBC series pilot *Left Coast*.

Travelling to Los Angeles in May 2009 for the annual YOUNG HOLLYWOOD issue of Nylon Magazine was a particular thrill for the young actor.

CAVAN CUNNINGHAM rounds out the lead cast in the role of Whittles, the meddling local shopkeeper – a noted departure from his most recognizable role as Fitzzy, the befuddled mayor of Dog River on the CTV series *Corner Gas*.

Cavan was born in California and now resides in Regina, Saskatchewan with time also spent in Bolivia, the Queen Charlotte Islands of the Pacific Northwest and Vancouver. His more than twenty years of success includes theatre, film and television. His theater performances include the mainstages of the Persephone Theatre (Saskatoon), The Globe (Regina), Theatre Northwest (Prince George) and several smaller companies throughout Western Canada.

His film and television credits are many in both national and international productions including *X-Files*, *Wiseguy*, *The Englishman's Boy*, *Prairie Giant: The Tommy Douglas Story*, *Just Friends*, *Little Mosque on the Prairie* and most notably a recurring role as Mayor Fitzzy for six seasons on the hit television series *Corner Gas*.

Cavan co-wrote and starred in the independent feature film *BarNone* and continues to pursue other projects including a masters degree in English and furniture making. His most heartfelt role is husband to his wife Kathryn and father to their children Lina and Jian.

ABOUT THE CREW

Rhonda Baker

Producer

Rhonda Baker is an independent producer of feature films and television movies with co-production and service production partners. Rhonda has worked on many diverse projects as a producer, supervising producer, line producer, and executive in charge of production, developing skills and building relationships.

Rhonda has produced several feature films including *Hungry Hills* filmed on location in Saskatchewan with producing partners Avi Federgreen, Rob King, Gary Fisher, and Executive Producers Jennifer Jonas and Leonard Farlinger, and Gerard Demaer; *Ticket Out* with producer/director Doug Lodato and producers Chris Noonan (*Babe*, *Beatrix Potter*) and Greg McClatchy, filmed on location in Des Moines, Iowa using both Saskatchewan and American crew, starring Ray Liotta; producer of *Stephen King's Dolan's Cadillac* filmed on location in Saskatchewan with director Jeff Beesley, starring Christian Slater, Emmanuelle Vaugier and Wes Bentley; *The Messengers*, a horror feature film released in February 2007 by Sony Pictures/Screen Gems, opening #1 in North America at the box office, directed by twin brothers, Oxide and Danny Pang and produced by the renowned Sam Raimi of Ghosthouse Pictures, starring Kristen Stewart, Dylan McDermott, Penelope Anne Miller and John Corbett; *One Last Dance* filmed on location in Manitoba for Minds Eye Entertainment with producing team of Rhonda, Patrick Swayze & Lisa Niemi.

Rhonda was the Saskatchewan producer of *Tideland*, directed by Terry Gilliam, produced by Gabriella Martinelli of Capri Films and Jeremy Thomas of Recorded

Pictures, UK which was launched at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival and recently released in North America. As a line producer Rhonda recently completed *Downloading Nancy*, a feature film starring Maria Bello, Jason Patrick, Rufus Sewell and Amy Brenneman; *Surveillance*, a feature film starring Julia Ormand, Bill Pullman, Pell James and Michael Ironside, directed by Jennifer Lynch, the talented daughter of filmmaker David Lynch; *The Stone Angel*, a feature film starring academy award winner Ellen Burstyn, produced by Buffalo Gal Pictures & Skogland Films and directed by talented Kari Skogland.

Rhonda has an impressive slate of projects in various stages of development, and continues to partner with respected filmmakers from around the globe.

Avi Federgreen

Producer

Avi Federgreen has over 15 years experience in the Canadian film industry. He has enjoyed a career that has spanned all genres of production from music videos to television series to full-length features.

Highlights include the acclaimed TV mini-series *It's Me...Gerald* (Showcase), and the feature films *Leslie, My Name Is Evil*, produced by New Real Films, directed by Reginald Harkema, and starring Kristen Hager and Gregory Smith, *High Life* (directed by Gary Yates, starring Timothy Olyphant) premiered at the Berlin Film Festival this year, and *One Week* (directed by Michael McGowan, starring Joshua Jackson), all of which he co-produced. *One Week* premiered with a gala screening at TIFF 2008 and was recently named Best Canadian Film at both the Calgary and Edmonton film festivals. *One Week* surpassed the 1.2 million dollar Canadian box office mark and was the #1 most downloadable rental movie on iTunes and finished in the top 10 in DVD sales in Canada during it's first week of release.

Avi also produced the documentary *As Slow As Possible* (directed by Scott Smith), an official selection at HotDocs 2008, and he served as Supervising Producer on the first two seasons of the Saskatoon-based TV series *Rabbit Fall*, starring Andrea Menard. In 2006, he took on the role of Associate Producer for the feature film *Emotional Arithmetic*, starring Susan Sarandon, Gabriel Byrne, and Christopher Plummer.

Currently, Avi is producing the feature film *George Ryga's HUNGRY HILLS* filmed on location in Saskatchewan with producing partners Rhonda Baker, Rob King, Gary Fisher, and Executive Producers Jennifer Jonas, and Leonard Farlinger of New Real Films, and Gerard Demaer of Gerard Productions. *HUNGRY HILLS* is directed by Rob King (Something More, Moccasin Flats – Redemption) and stars Keir Gilchrist (United States of Tara), John Pyper-Ferguson (Everest, Brothers and Sisters) and Gabrielle Rose (Mothers and Daughters, Grace).

Rob King

Director/Producer

Rob King's extensive resume dates back more than 20 years. An accomplished writer and director Rob was a founding partner of Minds Eye Entertainment, one of the largest independent production companies in Western Canada.

His directing credits include: *Talker* (Iain Maclean, Gerald Lenton-Young), *Moccasin Flats: Redemption* (Candace Fox, Lorne Cardinal), *Without Malice* (Gabrielle Anwar, Jennifer Beals) and *Something More* (Tom Cavanaugh, Jennifer Beals).

He was nominated for the prestigious Claude Jutra Award at the Genie Awards for direction on his first feature film, *Something More*. His short film, *Talker*, was a National Screen Institute Drama Prize winner and was screened at Local Heroes and The Toronto Worldwide Short Film Festival.

Rob won a Canadian Comedy Award in 2004 for his work as a director on the CTV series *Corner Gas* and was nominated for a 2004 Gemini Award for best direction in a comedy program or series.

In 2000 he won a Gemini Award for *Incredible Story Studio* for best children's or youth program or series. The children's series was produced for YTV and adapted youth-authored prose stories into teleplays of all genres. The series was sold world-wide to Disney Europe (U.K., France, Germany), Nickelodeon (Australia), Discovery Kids (USA), and later to markets in Ireland, Sweden, Israel, South Africa and Latin America.

Rob is presently working on the screen adaptation of Governor General Award-winning author Guy Vanderhaeghe's (*The Englishman's Boy*) epic novel *The Last Crossing*. He just completed directing a feature documentary, *A Cruel Wind Blows*, which looks at the effects of 40 years of nuclear testing in north eastern Kazakhstan.

Gary Fisher

Screenwriter/Producer

Gary Fisher was born in England but grew up in Alberta. He graduated with a BFA from the University of British Columbia, the same year his radio drama *Assassin Game* was produced by the CBC. He then worked for the publishing house Talonbooks, eventually editing fiction and non-fiction for the press.

Gary began writing for film while working in publishing. He was chosen from among nearly 140 applicants nation-wide for the National Story Editors Training Program in Toronto with trainers Rob Forsyth, Yan Moore, Dick Oleksiak, Ann

Frank and others. It was here that he met Rob King, with whom he would eventually partner to bring **George Ryga's HUNGRY HILLS** to the screen.

Gary worked as a story editor in series television and in 1998 began a long association with the children's series *Incredible Story Studio*, created by Virginia Thompson and Rob De Lint. As Executive Story Editor he edited or wrote the teleplays for 41 episodes of this popular series. He has also written a number of episodes for various animated series and headed teams of writers to write cinematics and dialogue for video games, including *Scarface*.

Since its inaugural year in 2005, he has taught half-time in the Film Arts Program at Langara College in Vancouver, BC, which trains directors, actors and writers in a collaborative environment. He continues to work with a small number of students there each year from January to August.

Gary has written the screenplays *Go Down Lightly*, *Red Rain*, *Little Bones*, and co-wrote the screenplays *Life Is Elsewhere* and *Open Season*. He is currently developing and producing the feature film project *The Things We Don't Know* with writer Carlin Rilkoﬀ, and writing and developing a television series, *The Great Lone Land*, through his company Helicon Pictures.

Ken Krawczyk CSC

Cinematographer

Cinematographer Ken Krawczyk has been working in collaboration with director Rob King on an on-going basis since 1986. An early convert to RED Camera technology, Ken owned one of the first models of the cutting edge camera in Canada.

Ken was the director of photography on the highly acclaimed television series *Corner Gas* for which he received a 2008 Gemini Award nomination for best photography in a comedy, variety or performing arts program or series. He will also work alongside *Corner Gas* creator Brent Butt in his upcoming CTV comedy series *Hiccups* scheduled to begin shooting in Vancouver, BC in the fall of 2009.

His extensive credits include: *renegadepress.com*, *I'll Be Seeing You*, *The Cradle Will Fall*, *I Downloaded a Ghost*, *Betrayed*, *Just Cause*, *Incredible Story Studio*, *Murder Seen*, *Borderline Normal* and *Without Malice*.

Jackie Dzuba

Editor

As a Gemini Award-winning editor, Jackie Dzuba has worked closely with director Rob King for many years. Her challenge is to package the endless hours of material she receives into a seamless and credible recreation of the story.

Dzuba won the 2000 Gemini Award for Best Picture Editing for *They Live to Polka*. The editor of the first episode of the hit CBC series *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, Dzuba was also the editor for *Prairie Giant: The Tommy Douglas Story*, for which she received a nomination for excellence in editing at the 2006 Seoul Drama Awards and *The Englishman's Boy* for which she received a 2008 Gemini Award nomination. She has also served as editor on the hit CTV comedy series *Corner Gas*. Dzuba edited the Gemini Award-winning MOW *Betrayed* (2003). She has edited over 30 television documentaries from 1990 to present for such broadcasters as CBC, A&E, Global Television and SCN.

Gary Varro

Production Designer

Saskatchewan-based production designer Gary Varro is also a notable visual artist, interior designer and film festival producer and artistic director.

Gary has been involved in the film and television industry for more than a decade. His credits include the television series' *Incredible Story Studio* and *Moccasin Flats*, the award-winning mini-series' *Prairie Giant: The Tommy Douglas Story* and Guy Vanderhaeghe's *The Englishman's Boy*. His feature film credits include *Just Friends* starring Ryan Reynolds and Amy Smart.

Sonja Clifton-Remple

Costume Designer

Sonja Clifton-Remple is a costume designer with extensive credits in film, television, theatre and fashion. Born and raised in the province of Saskatchewan, she has enjoyed a successful career as a freelance costumer and designer for 15 years.

Sonja has trained internationally, and has worked closely with award-winning celebrities, artists and filmmakers from Los Angeles, New York, London, Paris, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Germany, Japan, Ireland and China.

Her recent film and television credits include *Moccasin Flats: Redemption* with director Rob King, Jennifer Lynch's *Surveillance, Hybrid* for director Eric Valette and *The Shortcut* with executive producer Adam Sandler,

Todd Bryanton

Composer

Todd Bryanton has extensive experience as a music composer for film and television. Some of his recent credits include all six seasons of the hit CTV series **Corner Gas**, and the theatrical feature **Surveillance** (director: Jennifer Lynch, exec. producer David Lynch), which drew this review from The Hollywood Reporter: "Todd Bryanton's score helps maintain a constant undercurrent of dread." Todd was nominated in 2005 for the Lieutenant Governor's "Minus 30"

award for youthful contribution to the arts, and in 2007 he received the “Young Alumni” award from the University of Regina as a distinguished graduate under the age of 35. Todd is thrilled to have taken part in **HUNGRY HILLS**.

John Buchan, CSA and Jason Knight, CSA
Casting Directors

Award winning casting partners John Buchan and Jason Knight have worked extensively in the film and television industry in Canada and abroad.

Their select credits include the following feature films: Vincenzo Natali’s *Splice* (Adrian Brody, Sarah Polley), Sarah Polley’s *Away From Her* (Julie Christie, Gordon Pinsent), Doug Liman’s *Jumper* (Hayden Christensen, Rachel Bilson), Jeremy Podeswa’s *Fugitive Pieces* (Stephen Dillane), Istvan Szabo’s *Being Julia* (Annette Benning, Jeremy Irons) and Sofia Coppola’s *The Virgin Suicides* (Kirsten Dunst, Josh Hartnett).

For television select credits include *The Memory Keeper’s Daughter* (Gretchen Mol, Dermot Mulroney), *The Summit* (Bruce Greenwood, Wendy Crewson), *Anne of Green Gables: A New Beginning* (Barbara Hershey, Shirley MacLaine), *Billable Hours* (Brandon Firla) and *Slings and Arrows* (Paul Gross, Don McKellar).

Jason and John currently head up the casting department for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Carmen Kotyk, CDC
Casting Director

With over a decade of experience as a casting director, Carmen Kotyk has garnered a reputation for casting excellence within Canada and abroad.

Working with veteran producers including Brett Ratner (*Prison Break, 21*) Andrew Pfeffer (*Bangkok Dangerous, The Messengers*) and Canadians Kevin DeWalt (*The Englishman’s Boy, Dolan’s Cadillac*) and Rhonda Baker (*Tideland, Downloading Nancy*), Kotyk has established herself as a leader in her field.

Her recent feature film credits include *The Shortcut* (Dave Franco, James Woodward) the genre film co-produced by Adam Sandler’s Happy Madison Productions, *Grace* (Jordan Ladd), *Hybrid* (Shannon Beckner, Oded Fehr), *Walled In* (Mitscha Barton, Cameron Bright) and *Christmas in Wonderland* (Patrick Swayze, Tim Curry).

Kotyk has also worked extensively in television production including the CBC mini-series *The Englishman’s Boy* for director John N. Smith (*Boys of St. Vincent, Dangerous Minds*), for which she received a Gemini Award (2008) for

best achievement in casting. The project was nominated for twelve awards including competing nominations in the Best Male Performance in a Leading Role category for industry veteran Nicholas Campbell and newcomer Michael Eisner.

She was also nominated for a Gemini Award (2006) for best achievement in casting for her work on *Prairie Giant: The Tommy Douglas Story*, an ensemble cast that included RH Thomson, Paul Gross and Don McKellar.

Carmen Kotyk is one of the few professionals working in her field who has cast extensively across the country and has been a full member of the Casting Directors Society of Canada since 2000.

Jennifer Jonas

Executive Producer

New Real Films partner Jennifer Jonas is currently producing Reg Harkema's latest feature *Leslie, My Name is Evil*.

She produced *Toronto Stories* which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2008 for which she was nominated CFTPA Producer of the Year. She produced Bruce LaBruce's gay zombie movie, *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* which premiered at Sundance 2008.

In 2007, she produced *All Hat* starring Luke Kirby and Rachel Leigh Cook for which she was also nominated CFTPA Producer of the Year. She produced *Monkey Warfare* starring Don McKellar and Tracy Wright which won a Special Jury Prize at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2006. She executive produced *Cake* starring Heather Graham and *Sugar*, starring Brendan Fehr nominated for Best Actor and Best Adapted screenplay Genies. She produced Don McKellar's feature film *Childstar* starring Jennifer Jason Leigh with Rhombus Media. She produced *The Perfect Son* starring Colm Feore and David Cubitt nominated for two Best Actor Genies.

Other feature film credits as producer include *The Life Before This* (co-producer), *Perfect Pie* (co-producer) and the Cannes Film Festival Prix de la Jeunesse Winner, *Last Night* (associate producer). For television, Jennifer produced Grammy-nominated, *Satie and Suzanne* as well as *Firebird* and *Elizabeth Rex* for Rhombus Media. As Assistant Director, Jennifer worked on the Academy Award-winning *The Red Violin* and *Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*.

Leonard Farlinger
Executive Producer

New Real Films partner Leonard Farlinger is a writer/director/producer.

He is currently producing Reg Harkema's feature, *Leslie, My Name is Evil*.

He directed *All Hat* written by novelist Brad Smith which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival 2007. In 2008, he co-produced the feature films, *Otto; or, Up With Dead People* and *Toronto Stories*. In 2006, he produced *Monkey Warfare* which won a Special Jury prize at the Toronto International Film Festival.

In 2004, he directed the Gemini Award-winning movie-of-the-week, *In The Dark* starring Kathleen Robertson about Montreal's famous LSD experiments.

A three-time Genie Nominee for best short film, his first feature, *The Perfect Son* was nominated for two Best Actor Genies. He is currently adapting Rudy Wiebe's best-selling novel *A Discovery of Strangers*.

Gerard Demaer
Executive Producer

Gerard Demaer is a Saskatchewan-born entrepreneur with a keen eye for identifying opportunities outside the traditional business purview – a skill that served him well in his inaugural role as an executive producer.

No stranger to the film and television business, Gerard Productions Inc. (with partner Tracy Demaer) has operated in Saskatchewan for more than a decade.

Their credits include the hit CTV television series *Corner Gas* (Brent Butt, Gabrielle Miller), Global/APTN's primetime youth series *renegadepress.com* (Bronson Pelletier, Ksenia Solo) and feature films *Grace* (Jordan Ladd), Terry Gilliam's *Tideland* (Jeff Bridges) and *Lullaby for Pi* (Rupert Friend, Forest Whitaker).

A chance encounter with the *Hungry Hills* script compelled Gerard to commit to his first producing venture under the mentorship of veteran industry producer Rhonda Baker and RGB Films, a relationship that continues today. His passion for the project and the process (from financing to creative development) has secured his role as an up-and-coming producer in the film and television industry.

Alongside Trilight Entertainment Inc. partners Holly Baird and Shayne Putzlocher, Gerard is currently developing indigenous Canadian projects for the small and large screen.

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