

***Mongrel Media
Presents***

PAST PERFECT

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DANIEL MACIVOR

**STARRING REBECCA JENKINS, DANIEL MACIVOR, MARIE BRASSARD,
KATHRYN MACLELLAN AND MAURY CHAYKIN**

(Canada, 2002, 88 minutes)

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Past Perfect is a romantic and resonant first-time feature from Cape Breton born writer/director Daniel MacIvor.

Produced by Camelia Frieberg with imX Communications' Chris Zimmer acting as Executive Producer, **Past Perfect** was shot on location in Halifax. The film features Rebecca Jenkins (*Black Harbor, South of Wawa, Bye Bye Blues*), Maury Chaykin (*Nero Wolfe, The Adjuster, The Sweet Hereafter*), Marie Brassard (*Polygraph, Le Confessionnal*) and Daniel MacIvor (*The Five Senses, Twitch City*).

Synopsis

. . .sometimes a destination can get in the way of a journey . . .

Past Perfect takes place over two days, two years apart. On an overnight flight from Halifax to Vancouver, Charlotte (Rebecca Jenkins), an unemployed sales clerk on the verge of giving up on her dream of marriage and children, finds herself sitting next to the nervous and seemingly stuffy Cecil (Daniel MacIvor), a linguistics professor who is in the process of ending a long-term relationship with a woman (Marie Brassard) who does not share his desire for a family. Despite an unpleasant start to their relationship as seatmates, over the course of the flight Charlotte and Cecil find themselves falling into one another's lives and in love.

Intercut with their meeting is a Saturday two years later, Charlotte and Cecil now live together in Halifax and are in the midst of a crisis in their relationship. What starts off seeming like a case of a couple's general malaise, reveals itself to be the fallout from a very specific tragedy, one which forces Charlotte and Cecil to decide whether the end of a dream means the end of the relationship or the beginning of a real life together.

Origins of the Project by Daniel MacIvor

When Camelia Frieberg called in the spring of 2000 and asked me if I would be interested in working with her on a new project, I had no hesitation in saying yes. When she told me that at least twenty five percent of the film had to take place on an airplane I realized I should perhaps feel daunted by such a limitation. Instead I felt liberated.

Background:

I had been working on a screenplay for several years and was having some difficulty. Having worked for many years in the theatre, I was used to the restriction of space in making my work. Working on my screenplay the world was open to me, anything was possible; but so many possibilities were in fact making things impossible. Finally, I was given a spatial directive which allowed me to focus my story. In a way that made things incredibly clear.

For some time I had been considering an idea where we flash backward and forward with a couple, seeing how they begin to fall in love, and then how they begin to fall apart. The airplane scenario seemed, as it were, *perfect*. They meet on an airplane on a red-eye flight from Halifax to Vancouver, over the course of the flight they fall in love. Meanwhile we flash forward, two years later, and watch how love transforms with time. By juxtaposing two seemingly opposite events we can start to see how the things that draw us to a person are more often than not the same things that eventually repel us. I called the draft *The 49 Parallel*, imagining that as they flew across the country they travelled its border.

Development:

As I continued working on the idea, the notion of perfection began to enter my thinking. Wasn't it in fact the perfection of that first flush of love that cast a shadow over the rest of the relationship – and then what if fate was to enter the picture, what if they were convinced that there was something fated about their meeting, making it all the more perfect, all the more impossible to live beyond. And then I began to bring a notion of perfection into the present day activities – that their actions were focused around a particular event which was to bring a kind of perfection to their lives, the perfection of a child. Soon the present day (or flash forward) events became centered around one particular argument, one particular Saturday, in a way mirroring the time line of their first meeting on the flight. And soon it became clear to me that what my story was about was trying to find a way to get on with their lives after falling short of the perfection we push ourselves to achieve, to find a way to move on from even the idea of “perfect”. *The 49th Parallel* became ***Past Perfect***.

I first worked with Camelia twelve years ago on an odd little independent feature (back in the days when pretty much everything done in this country was odd, little and independent) – I was acting and she was the first assistant director. I remember being immediately struck by her rigour, determination and

fearlessness in either getting the day or knowing when the day had got us. We kept in contact through the years, eventually working together again with her producing and me story editing and acting in Jeremy Podeswa's *Eclipse* and later in *The Five Senses*.

Associate Producing with Camelia is my long time working partner Sherrie Johnson. We have been together for eight years working in theatre and film. Sherrie produced my last short *Until I Hear From You* and with our company produced Jeremy Podeswa's most recent two short films, *The Susan Smith Tapes* and *Touch*. Sherrie and I have developed a process of working in theatre where respect for the work is on an equal level with respect for the people who make the work. Slowly we have been bringing this sensibility to our working in film – where the sheer number of people and departments involved sometimes makes it near impossible to ever all be truly “on the same page” on any given day.

The Crew:

The crew is impressive and I am honoured that they were able to be a part of this experience. We worked with veteran Gary Swim on locations. Maggie Thomas, with over a dozen years of experience under her belt, was the script supervisor. Emanuel Jannasch, the original designer of *Lexx*, *New Waterford Girl*, and dozens of other shows brought so much to the film as our production designer. Betty Belmore, Halifax's senior Make-Up Artist also came on board. These experienced professionals, and many others, have had a positive and profound impact on the project. It is especially important for me to work with someone like Emanuel whose visual sense is so developed and yet whose language I understand. In speaking about the script we referenced the same kind of influences and see the same sort of formalist composition. Rudolf Blahacek, the cinematographer, is someone with whom I can communicate fluidly and who understood that this is not a slice-of-life hand-held digital feature but rather a considered and composed study of two people and their imperfections in an imperfect world.

The Cast

Daniel MacIvor

Daniel MacIvor is the co-writer and star of *House* (directed by Laurie Lynd), and writer and star of the Genie Award Winning musical short *The Fairy Who Didn't Want To Be A Fairy Anymore*, also directed by Lynd. His short films *Permission* and *Until I Hear From You* both premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and his short tapes *Margaret Atwood and the Problem With Canada* and *Wake Up Jerk Off*, have played to great acclaim internationally. As an actor he has appeared in Thom Fitzgerald's *Beefcake*, in Don McKellar's inventive CBC series *Twitch City*, and in Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses*, for which he was nominated for a Genie. With Producer Sherrie Johnson, Daniel is the Artistic Director of the international touring theatre company da da kamera, recently winning a Village Voice Obie Award for their New York production of MacIvor's play *In On It*. **Past Perfect** is MacIvor's first feature film.

"To me, I feel that everyone's input is equal...we're making this movie together."

"We set out to tell a story, and whatever input we get from the world, we take that and we go with that. I am a story-teller, it's what I am, it's my nature."

Daniel MacIvor, 2001

Rebecca Jenkins

Rebecca Jenkins is one of those rare multi-talented people who make it all look effortless. As an actor, she embodies her character down to every last nuance. As a singer, her voice carries a warmth that feels both real and ethereal. Jenkins burst onto the Canadian film scene with her charismatic acting and singing performance in Anne Wheeler's *Bye Bye Blues*, for which she received a Best Actress Genie Award. Her feature films include *Interstate 60*, *Bob Roberts*, *Darrow*, *South of Wawa* and *Cowboys Don't Cry*.

Jenkins' many starring roles in movies for television include CBC's *Family Reunion* (her first film and first Gemini Award nomination), CBS's *And Never Let Her Go*, *Guilty Hearts*, *Catch A Falling Star*; Disney's *Angels in the Infield*; ABC's *The Ruby Silver*; and NBC's *Bad Prospects*, *Till Death Do Us Part*, *Honour Bright* and *Harvest*, for which she received another Gemini Award nomination. Her films for cable include Showtime's, *Bad Prospect* and USA Networks' *Split Image*.

Jenkins is well known for her starring roles in CBC and Alliance's successful series *Black Harbour*, for which she received a Gemini Award nomination, and in

Atlantis's *Destiny Ridge*. She recently guest-starred on A&E's *Nero Wolfe* and CTV's *The Associates*, and has appeared in *Outer Limits*, *Beyond Reality*, *Avonlea* and *Street Legal*.

As a singer, Jenkins toured with Parachute Club and Jane Siberry. Jenkins continues to perform on occasion. Her most recent musical performance was in a tribute to Joni Mitchell.

Jenkins plays the character, Charlotte, opposite Daniel MacIvor in the feature length film ***Past Perfect***. Her exquisite performance carries her character through the tribulations of loneliness, pain, loss, and new dreams.

"Daniel is so talented. I would be thrilled to work on anything that he is doing. I think everybody feels that way. It's been the best experience for me shooting, because it is all about the craft. It's pretty magical, what he [Daniel] does."

Rebecca Jenkins, 2001

Marie Brassard

Marie Brassard studied theater at the Conservatoire d'Art Dramatique de Québec. Since then she has devoted herself to the creation of new theatre and film. For many years she has been a close collaborator to director Robert Lepage. She has co-authored and performed in *The Dragon's Trilogy*, *Polygraph*, *The Seven Streams of the River Ota*, and *Geometry of Miracles*. For Lepage she has played Lady M. in *Macbeth* and Ariel in *The Tempest*. In film, she was Lucie Champagne in *Le polygraphe*, which she co-authored with Mr. Lepage, and performed the part of Hanako in the film *NO*. She was part of the film cast of *The Claim*, from the British director Michael Winterbottom and *La loi du cochon*, directed by Eric Canuel. This year she will play the part of Francine Juneau, a journalist in the political satire series *Bunker*. Her first solo play, *Jimmy*, has been presented in Montreal, Paris and Brussels and is currently touring Europe, USA and Canada. Artistic director of the production company *Infrarouge Théâtre*, Marie is now working on her next play, entitled *La noirceur*.

Kathryn MacLellan

Kathryn MacLellan's acting career stemmed from her life as a competitive ice-dancer. She began her training as an actress at the Lee Strasberg Theatre in Los Angeles. On her return to Halifax, Kathryn's theatre credits began to accumulate with performances in *Westside Story*, *Cabaret*, and the national tour of Don Messer's *Jubilee*. Over the years Kathryn's career in film and television has flourished. Since her command performance as a lead in *Meet The Navy* for the CBC Kathryn has worked steadily. Her talent has landed her roles in various

movies of the week, such as *Catch A Falling Star* (CBS), *Blessed Stranger* (CTV), and *The Christmas Shoes*, which will air this fall on CBS. Kathryn has also just finished shooting *A Guy & A Girl* for Filmworks, which premieres on The Women's Network. Kathryn will be guest starring in the new series *Quilts* written and directed by Brian Heighon for CBC. When she is not performing Kathryn continues to choreograph for ice skaters from Halifax to Vancouver.

Maury Chaykin

Chaykin, originally born in Brooklyn, is legendary in all mediums of Canadian film, television, and theatre. Mr. Chaykin has established himself on both sides of the border as one of the preeminent character actors of our time. His impressive list of film credits includes: *The Art of War*, *What's Cooking*, *Mystery Alaska*, *Entrapment*, *My Cousin Vinny*, *Jerry And Tom*, *The Postman*, *A Life Less Ordinary*, *Love and Death On Long Island*, *Devil In A Blue Dress*, and *Unstrung Heroes*. Chaykin also appeared in *Hero* with Dustin Hoffman, turned in a scene-stealing role as the suicidal army officer in Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves*, and worked for esteemed director Atom Egoyan in *The Sweet Hereafter* and *The Adjuster*.

Maury's work has garnered numerous awards especially in Canada where he won the Nellie Award in 1986 and a Genie Award in 1995 for Best Actor in a Leading Role for *Whale Music*. Chaykin also won a 1998 Gemini Award for Best Actor in a Guest Lead for his performance in *La Femme Nikita*. In addition, the ensemble cast of *The Sweet Hereafter* won the prestigious New York Film Critics Association award for acting.

Other television credits include his memorable award winning portrayal of the legendary Hal Banks in *Canada's Sweetheart: The Saga of Hal C. Banks*, as well as *Due South*, *The Tracy Ullman Show* and, of course the title character in the A&E series, *Nero Wolfe*, opposite Timothy Hutton. His stage work includes *A Man's Man*, *Leave It to Beaver Is Dead*, *Gimme Shelter*, and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

The Key Personnel

Chris Zimmer (Executive Producer)

Since the establishment of Imagex in 1985, Chris Zimmer has become one of Canada's most respected experts in the field of feature film and international co-production building his reputation on bringing provocative, intelligent work to movie screens. Zimmer's past projects include the award winning films *Love and Death on Long Island* (John Hurt, Jason Priestly), *Margaret's Museum* (Helen Bonham Carter, Kate Nelligan), and *New Waterford Girl* (Andrew McCarthy, Cathy Moriarty).

Under Zimmer's leadership, Imagex has expanded into the multi-faceted imX Communications, active in television, animation and new media development. In 2000/2001, Zimmer co-produced *Weight of Water* (Sean Penn, Elizabeth Hurley) with Miracle Pictures, *My Little Eye* with WT2, *The Pilot's Wife* (Christine Lahti) with Lion's Gate and *Una Casa con Vista al Mar* (Gabriel Arcand, Imanol Arias) with Intercartel in Spain and Cinema Sur in Venezuela.

Currently, Zimmer is Executive Producer of *seats 3a&3c* (Directors: Tricia Fish, Thom Fitzgerald, Daniel MacIvor Andrea Dorfman and Richard Kwietniowski), a package of five feature films shot on DV to be released on 35mm and Executive producer of *Julie Walking Home* (Miranda Otto, William Fichtner and Lothaire Bluteau). Directed by Agnieszka Holland, *Julie Walking Home* is a Canadian, German, Polish co-production.

Camelia Frieberg (Producer)

Frieberg continues to be known for her dedication to developing new talent as well as her long standing partnerships with Atom Egoyan and Jeremy Podeswa. Frieberg produced *The Sweet Hereafter*, which won the Grand Prix, the Ecumenical Award and the FIPRESSCI International Film Critics prize at the 1997 Cannes Film Festival, and two Academy Award nominations; *Exotica*, which won the FIPRESSCI prize at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival; *The Adjuster* and *Speaking Parts*. She has won two Genie Awards for best Motion Picture for *Exotica* and *The Sweet Hereafter* and "Woman of the Year" from Vancouver's Women in Film and Television and Excellence in Production Award from Toronto's WIFTT. She also produced the first features *Masala* and executive produced Amnon Buchbinder's *The Fishing Trip*, which earned two 1998 Genie nominations. Frieberg lives with her family in a rural community in Nova Scotia.

Sherrie Johnson (Associate Producer)

Born and raised in Chicago, Sherrie moved to Toronto in 1990. With da da kamera Sherrie has produced short films by Wiebke von Carolsfeld (*Spiral Bound*), Jeremy Podeswa (*The Susan Smith Tapes* and *Touch*) and Daniel MacIvor (*Until I Hear From You* and *Sydney That Summer*). She worked with a number of Toronto theatre companies, including a stint as General Manager of Hillar Liitoja's DNA Theater, before joining forces with Daniel MacIvor to run da da kamera. Since that time da da kamera has toured Canada, Scotland, Ireland, United States, Australia, Norway, Israel and Europe with *In On It*, *Monster* and *Here Lies Henry*, winning numerous awards, including an Edinburgh Fringe First Award for *Henry*, a Best Production DORA Award from the Toronto Theater Community for *The Soldier Dreams*. Most recently, *In On It* was doubly honoured by the New York theatre community for its run at P.S. 122, where it garnered a GLAAD award for Outstanding New Theater, as well as a Village Voice OBIE award. Sherrie was also the producer for Jan Komarek's Sound Image Theater (1993-2000), is co-founder and programmer, with Menno Plukker, of the Six Stages Festival and represents Canadian playwright John Mughton.

Rudolf Blahacek (Director of Photography)

Rudolf Blahacek's ability as a Director of Photography spans television and documentary shooting styles. His selected credits include the MOW's *The Pilot's Wife*, a CBS/Lion's Gate production, and *The Heist*, an A&E/Alliance Atlantis project. Blahacek's feature films include *The Herd (Red Sky/NFB)*, and *Garage* (Paradark Films Inc.).

"It was an honour to work with Daniel for the first time. Daniel becomes very collaborative: He's interested in what people have to say, what they think, and how they see characters. He is open to other people's vision and letting people into the project. You don't think as much about the technical points, but more about the character, where is the character, what space is he/she in, what place in the story is he in, and what place is he emotionally...and we approach ever scene that same way. It's much more of a literary background. I was looking forward to working with someone who had more of a philosophical approach."

Rudolf Blahacek, D.O.P.
2001

Emanuel Jannasch (Production Designer)

A native Nova Scotian, Emanuel Jannasch studied architecture at Cornell and Dalhousie and works in many aspects of building and design as well as in film. Clients in the design build sphere include the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Salter Street Films, Waterfront Development Corporation, as well as individuals. He was on the design team for the Electropolis Sound Stage project and the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia Headquarters, both of which were honoured by the Nova Scotia Association of Architects. His first production design credit was *Def-Con 4*, his most recent being Daniel MacIvor's ***Past Perfect***. In the intervening years he worked both as art director and production designer. Favourite projects include Dan Petrie's *Calm at Sunset*, Richard Kwietniowski's *Love and Death on Long Island*, and Mort Ransen's *Margaret's Museum*. His design of Trisha Fish's *New Waterford Girl* was honoured with a Genie nomination. In theater he has designed George Elliot Clarke's *Whylah Falls* for its Halifax runs and also for the National Arts Center in Ottawa. He is an active teacher in architecture as well as film design.

"We were faced with surprises, and the rest of us were just keeping up with Daniel's amazing ability to work with circumstance. We ended up in a quite wild and wonderful place. But, once again, Daniel used circumstance as a way of strengthening character."

Emanuel Jannasch, Production Designer
2001

Mike Munn (Picture Editor)

Originally from Listowel Ontario, Mike moved to Toronto to attend the Film Program at Ryerson University. Since graduating, Mike has worked as picture editor with such directors as Peter Mettler, Bruce MacDonald, John Greyson, and Ann Marie Fleming. Mike is also the producer and director of the award winning short film *A hole in the road*. ***Past Perfect*** is Mike's first collaboration with Daniel MacIvor.

"Working with Daniel was not unlike writing because the text and the writing was changing both structurally and dramatically during the process of editing. This made editing with Daniel one of the most creative and free flowing experiences that I've ever had."

Mike Munn
2002

Richard Feren (Composer)

Richard has composed original scores for Canadian Theater since 1992. For da da kamera Richard has designed: *In On It, Monster, The Soldier Dreams, Here Lies Henry*. Other Theatres include: Tarragon (*Faust*, Dora nomination; *The Designated Mourner*); Theatre Passe Muraille (*This Hotel; Possible Worlds; Excerpts from the Emo Journals*, Dora Award); Platform 9 (*Steel Kiss/Gulag; Das Rheingold; Megatropolis*); Modern Times (*Hamlet*, Dora Award; *Aurash*, Dora Award; *August 22*); VideoCabaret (*Trudeau and The FLQ; The VideoCabaret News*); Soulpepper (*Uncle Vanya; Betrayal; Endgame*, Dora Award; *Plantonov*); and Daniel Brooks' and Guillermo Verdecchia's *Insomnia*, Dora nomination. Film scores include Daniel MacIvor's *Permission, Until I Hear from You*, and Robert LePage's *Possible Worlds*. Richard has been awarded the 1999 Pauline McGibbon Award and has released two solo CD's: *Descent of Ishtar* and under the name CRIMESCENE *Rapture*.

Interviews

Daniel MacIvor & Independent Film Channel Interview

HOST: Can you tell me a little bit about executing your own work? In other words, for everything that comes together, does there have to be a separation between the writing, the directing, and the acting?

DANIEL: I think that there's something I like about multi-tasking; about wearing all the hats. It seems that there's an efficiency in it. I have to depend on the people around me to give me indications of this or that; what they feel is working, may work, or may potentially not. But that's pretty much what it's like when I work in theatre. Except the amount I work in theatre, that's what's... what I like..., what it forces in this environment, it does force a kind of collaboration in a different sense that people are used to working 'auteur', and that's not really my style.

HOST: How do you keep objectivity and get the product they way you want it to be. How do you keep integrity? Separation?

DANIEL: Objectivity, objectivity. I'll have lot's of objectivity when I'm in the editing room. And right now, it's about trying to take enough pictures to tell the story that was written. And, again, I think it's really keeping...the objectivity comes from the support of the people I have around me. And the people...this is my first feature, when Camelia and I talked in the beginning we realized it was really important that we have a crew of people who were very experienced, and I thought of this long before. And you know, it was people who weren't at my level. It was people that were actually beyond where I was in terms of the film world; so that I could learn....

Interviews with Thor Henrikson...

With Daniel MacIvor, Writer, Director, "Cecil"

THOR: So how's your crew been?

DANIEL: They're great; I love them. I feel like they're my family. I think often that happens on films, where you get this incredible familial feeling. You have this really tight group; this a little bit different because for me these people, they live in the same community, they know each other really well, and they all have this history. I feel like I've been welcomed into this family. It's been really great. These people are working for about a third of what they normally make, and they're just really behind it. If we need to stay late, they'll stay late, if we need whatever we need, we'll do it. I've been working for years in theatre, kind of to try and bring all elements of the company together in terms of their feeling of commitment, and feeling of input, and feeling of ownership of the work. And so, we talk about 'we' all the time in theatre: 'our show', 'our score, our lights...and in film, it's still a bit of the 'auteur'. To them it's my movie. And, I suppose in the end I end up taking the fall or taking the praise, or whatever happens with these things. To me, it feels that everyone's input is equal...we're making this movie together. And, also,

there's also this interesting sense that the director's vision is somehow pure, or more direct, or must be followed. And I'm trying to say, no actually we set out to tell a story, and whatever input we get from the world, we take that and we go with that. So that is my vision. I just happen to be the guy whose got the 'Type A' personality, whose gonna get it together and do it. I guess I am a storyteller, it's what I am, it's my nature.

With Emanuel Jannasch, Production Designer

THOR: What were there any particular challenges that you faced on this show?

EMANUEL: Well, I think there were a lot of things to work with. The fact that there were two different films, or two different stories that Daniel treated, there are two different films that were then cut together to make the whole, this was a strong beginning. I think most of the challenges came in the form of changes. We were faced with a couple of different surprises and Daniel wrote his way right around them, and of course, the rest of us are just keeping up with his amazing ability to work with circumstance.

THOR: Anything in particular?

EMANUEL: Well, there were two. One, is we had scouted this beautiful, bleak, empty airport, which is exactly what he had in mind to start off the film. And, the day we got out there, they were just finishing putting up a huge amount of Christmas decorations so that the whole atmosphere of the airport was changed. And, you know, he could see his way of shooting around it, but by the time we finished the morning's work, the one place he was really counting on for emptiness was filled with the biggest and brightest Christmas tree that you ever saw, and at that point we started making a Christmas movie. And, you know, I think that Daniel did that very effectively. So, you know, when we first started looking at Christmas, it was a compromise, but then it quickly turned it into a real strength.

The second thing was, the house we were looking for a very cool and understated and sort of rectangular modernist kind of a place for CECIL, and at the last minute the location we had settled on was taken from us. The tenant was very happy to have us use it, the landlord was not. So, we ended up in this quite wild and wonderful place, which was really, not what we had been looking for to house that particular character. But, again, Daniel used it as a way of actually strengthening the character by justifying and working with that contrast.

THOR: What about shooting on DV? Does that affect you?

EMANUEL: Well, it was the first time for me. I would say the main challenge is in terms of the colour, the DV tends to, compared to film, simplify colour a little bit. So things are more saturated than you are used to seeing on film, and so on.

THOR: What did you have to do to prepare this house?

EMANUEL: This house was all white inside; it was far too bright. So, we had to give it some kind of colour, which was an opportunity to cool it down also, which is what we wanted. So, the walls are all blue-grey. You know, there's some pretty wacky things in the house. Like, for example, the first floor is very thick and the owner intends to put a

fish tank between the ground floor and the second floor. So, there's a four foot hole in the floor. It really was in our way to have this glass hole in the floor, so, you know, we had to build a round table to work with that shape. And, you know, things like that. Building a custom headboard to fit into the funny corner where that the bed had to go, and so forth. And, because of the budget restraints, we're also working with the owner, so we're doing things that will be helpful to him in the long run as well.

THOR: Can we talk again about shooting for DV? Did you do tests, or how did you figure out what the best approach would be?

EMANUEL: Well, you know, I was looking at the monitor a lot at the beginning. We started out in locations where there wasn't a lot of work for us to do anyway, except to let's say, heighten or control the extremes of what we were looking at. So, that was an opportunity to look in the monitor and see exactly what the camera was doing. That was, I guess, the learning curve – mostly in those first couple of days.

THOR: Did you talk to Rudi much about how best to...

EMANUEL: Um, ya, we had...Rudi and I had worked before on a film project, so, we knew that we were fairly much in tune with what we wanted to do. I would say the difference in this case, in the way we talked a little bit about the house, there was also the airplane; and there's the two films: 'the airplane film', and 'the house film', or 'the house film' is actually 'the bookcase film.' But, the airplane was treated a bit like a romantic comedy, whereas this bookcase story was, a little grittier. So, on the airplane, we played the colours up a little. We tried to use colours there. For instance, the little seat-back-things, was an opportunity to introduce some colour to that plane. By using the deep maroon and blue, and the maroon, of course, comes out quite red. But, the idea there was to give Rudi something that would respond well to the changing light levels. So, in the beginning when things were still fairly upbeat, those colours read quite brightly, but then they become very somber as the light comes down. So, something more yellow or orange, or even possibly a brighter green...those colours wouldn't have done that for us...that was our thinking there.

THOR: Can you think of anything else you'd like to say? You're not responsible for the noise here are you? (joking re: local construction)

EMANUEL: Uh, no. In fact, I'm always trying to tell people to work in a studio so that we can do exactly what we want and nobody has to pay attention to the construction racket and so forth, but, that's where the budget comes in I guess.

THOR: Great.

With Rebecca Jenkins

THOR: Any thoughts on the last day?

REBECCA: Well, when Faye picked me up from the office this morning, I saw her and thought, 'no, I don't want it to be over.' But, it's been...it's that weird bittersweet end to a production that's been a really great...but it's been such a close, warm experience that I

don't really want it to end but, you have to because the story's finished (laughing). And, so it feels like yeah, let's go now...it's all done. So ... it's bittersweet.

THOR: Isn't there the possibility that Daniel could write more over the weekend?

REBECCA: (laughing) There's a great possibility that Daniel could write more. Oh my gosh!

THOR: What about coming back to Halifax to work?

REBECCA: Oh, I always love coming here. You come here and you think, oh ya, it's way more relaxing and more beautiful. I feel so much more human...and that's a really good feeling.

THOR: Have you worked with any of the people on this crew before?

REBECCA: Ya, I've worked with a number of them on different things before. And of course, Mike, the sound guy, is so funny and I love Betty. It's been interesting between Daniel and Rudi because, they're so very different in how they are.

It's been the best experience for me shooting, I have to say. Because it's all about the craft. You know, and everybody's all about the craft. But, it's also really relaxed.

THOR: Have you ever worked with Camelia before?

REBECCA: No, I have not. I know her work and who she supports...she has a nice golden line-up there. So if anything, with her sort of track record we'll see! Hopefully it will be good for Daniel, because he's so talented...don't tell him that. I think she's got a great eye. If anything ever happens with Daniel again, I'd be lucky if I got another chance. I would be thrilled. I would be thrilled to work on anything that he is doing. I think everybody feels that way. It's pretty magical stuff that he does. It's the real stuff.

THOR: Thank you.

With Rudolf (Rudi) Blahacek, Director of Photography

THOR: Have you ever worked with Daniel before?

RUDI: No, it's the first time I've worked with Daniel. I've known Daniel for a few years, mainly through theatre and through common friends we have. So, it was an honour to work with him for the first time. And, what I like about Daniel is that he hasn't had much feature film experience, and so, we have a little bit of a different approach in terms of the ways of continuity, in the way he doubles up a character, it's much more of a literary approach. The last three films I've worked on were more technical director's. I was looking forward to working with someone who had more of a philosophical approach.

THOR: Were there any challenges with Daniel constantly re-writing the script every night?

RUDI: No, because it only got better, so it was part of the process. And, as you re-write something, in a way by doing that, you can prove and become flexible and become part of the project. It's a process that is very natural, and so, it's...no, it wasn't a problem.

THOR: Now, you're shooting on DV, and you'll be releasing on film. What type of things did you do to...?

RUDI: Well, I went to the post-house, which is the first thing I did, to see what facilities they use, what kind of materials they have. And, just a bunch of tests to see what printing stage I would use, what kind of print stock, what I could do to video...I just want to see where I can take it...In a lot of ways, Daniel becomes very collaborative. Daniel's very interested in what people have to say, what they think, and how they see characters. So he is really open to other people's vision and letting people into the project that way, which makes it a real challenge. So, you don't think as much about the technical points, but more about the general things and the way you see them; and about the character, where is the character, what space is he in, what place in the story is he in, and what place is he emotionally...and we approach every scene that same way.

THOR: Have there been things that you have been able to do with the camera that have helped him bring out...

RUDI: Yah, that's the two story points. It's how do we see the character, and how we discover the character. At the beginning of the film we try do a lot of out of focus stuff; we see the characters through things, we shoot behind them, hanging stuff on the walls, and with the connector walls we see more and more of the character. And the same with the lighting: the lighting is dark at the beginning, and we brought a bit more light and a bit more colour as the story develops.

THOR: And what scenes are you shooting here right now?

RUDI: This is the scene which takes place in the somewhat famous blue room. We are not quite sure what's happening in this room. They were supposed to have a child, and this was supposed to be the children's room. The blue room is the anchor of the movie; this specific room in the house, which is a very big house.

THOR: How about working on something that is so low budget?

RUDI: My background is mostly low-budget, and I like working on that kind of level because there is a camaraderie between people. And it's much less political than working on a feature on a bigger scale. It has its challenges because you don't necessarily have the tools you wished you had...but, you become creative in other ways, because you think, 'how can I make things work with what you have?' and that sometimes can be better than if you have all the tools you need, and you don't explore the storytelling as well.

Past Perfect

Written and Directed by Daniel MacIvor

Starring: Rebecca Jenkins
Daniel MacIvor
Marie Brassard
Kathryn MacLellan
and
Maury Chaykin

Costume Designer: James A. Worthen

Production Designer: Emanuel Jannasch

Editor: Mike Munn

Director of Photography: Rudolf Blahacek

Composer: Richard Feren

Associate Producer: Sherrie Johnson

Executive Producers: Christopher Zimmer and William Ritchie

Producer: Camelia Frieberg