

**Mongrel Media
Presents**

CAIRO TIME

A Film by Ruba Nadda

(90 mins, Canada 2009)

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Juliette (Patricia Clarkson), a magazine editor, arrives in Cairo to meet her husband Mark (Tom McCamus), a UN official in Gaza. When he is unavoidably delayed, Mark sends his friend and former security officer Tareq (Alexander Siddig) to show her around the city. As she gets used to the customs and rhythm of life in Cairo, she finds herself falling not only for the city's charms, but for Tareq as well.

Set in the chaotic but intoxicating Egyptian capital, ***Cairo Time*** is a romantic drama about a brief, unexpected love affair that catches two people completely off-guard.

ONE PAGE SYNOPSIS

Juliette (Patricia Clarkson), a magazine editor in her late forties, arrives in Cairo. The airport is chaotic and bustling with people. She pushes past them and searches the crowd for her husband Mark (Tom McCamus), a UN official who works in a refugee camp in Gaza. Curiously, she spots her name in English on a sign held by a local. Tareq (Alexander Siddig), a handsome Egyptian man dressed in a simple faded black suit with a white shirt, smiles gently and outstretches his hand. He informs her Mark has been held up and that he has been sent in his place.

Tareq escorts Juliette to her hotel. Before leaving her, he bows, smiles and hands her his business card should she ever need his help. Juliette enters her room. She immediately opens the French doors that lead to a balcony. Hot, humid air rushes in. The deafening sound of cars honking floods the room. She steps out. Central Cairo is spectacular and it takes her breath away. Beyond the hustle and bustle of Cairo traffic, the Nile stretches endlessly. The view is overwhelming. She drags a heavy armchair to the entrance of the balcony. She takes off her watch and resets it from Toronto time to Cairo time.

Mark calls. He's sorry. He can't get away. He doesn't know how long this situation will last. Juliette tries to explore Cairo on her own but every time she goes out, she is chased back to her hotel by young men who harass her. Her restlessness builds until she eventually tracks down Tareq who graciously plays host and offers to take her to the Pyramids. She refuses because Mark had been waiting for her arrival so that they might visit them together. Instead, Tareq and Juliette go for a walk: exploring the magnificent views of the city from Kasr el Nil Bridge.

Juliette, still restless, decides to go see her husband in Gaza. But here again, she is thwarted. The bus is stopped near the border by Israeli soldiers. They take her off the bus and call her husband to pick her up, but he can't get away so Juliette is forced to call Tareq again to drive her back to Cairo.

Over the next few days, Tareq escorts her through Cairo. Juliette hasn't felt this relaxed in ages. They go on a Nile boat ride; he buys her a traditional cartouche necklace. They visit Alexandria to attend the wedding of the daughter of Tareq's newly widowed, old flame. Tareq begins to realise that Juliette is more than just a naïve traveller who doesn't understand life in his city. Juliette comes to see him as more than a chauvinistic, if charming, man who seems indifferent to the obvious poverty and suffering of Egypt.

Cairo Time is a romantic drama about a brief, unexpected love affair that catches two people completely off-guard.

CAIRO TIME- PRODUCTION NOTES

He who hath not seen Cairo hath not seen the world. Her soil is gold; her Nile is a marvel; her women are like the black-eyed virgins of Paradise; her houses are palaces; and her air is soft, as sweet-smelling as aloe-wood, rejoicing the heart. And how can Cairo be otherwise, when she is the Mother of the World?

--"A Thousand and One Nights"

Cairo Time is a love letter to a city intertwined with a love story about a woman. It began when Syrian-Canadian writer/director Ruba Nadda first visited Cairo with her family many years ago. Returning a decade ago with one of her sisters, (and no longer under the protective eye of her father) they had memorable adventures. "The city was beautiful and the people were beautiful," Nadda recalled. Having lived in Damascus, and subsequently traveled the world, Nadda never forgot the grandeur and the chaos of this ancient city that was originally settled in Paleolithic times. Sitting at the border of what was once Upper and Lower Egypt, the area that was to become the metropolis of Cairo has played host to the Greeks, Romans, Crusaders, the Ottomans, Napoleon, and the British and is now one of the most densely populated cities in the world. "I remember the city being alive. It's gritty and historical and seething with humanity and I just had to capture it on screen." Truly, a journey through Cairo is a journey through time and it awakens your soul.

It was during Nadda's many trips to international film festivals with her 14 short films and her previous feature *Sabah*, that she came to appreciate the feelings of introspection and melancholy that traveling alone engenders. From these experiences came **Cairo Time**, something Nadda deems a "real love story, but one that is very un-West because to me the West is about acquiring, accomplishing, deadlines and running, running, running. The central character, Juliette, is suddenly forced to slow down and move on Cairo time." This film has a West-meets-East quality to the unexpected, unrequited love between an Arab man and a North American woman. It's also a throw to old style, classic films reminiscent of the restrained, emotional tension in the work of Jane Austen.

Juliette is a woman who married young and still ardently loves her husband, Mark, who works abroad. Their children have grown up and moved away. Life, doing what it usually does to a marriage, has replaced their hopes and dreams with accomplishment and responsibilities. In the back of her head, Juliette had thought that sooner or later, she and her husband would have time for each other, which was the reason for her trip to Cairo.

"I love this woman," explained Nadda. "She is quiet. And she has a sadness that's just under the surface which comes from a lifetime of being by herself a lot because she's been stood up by a husband whose work has often taken priority."

Unable to meet Juliette when she lands, but knowing that she is an independent woman who is likely to head off on her own, Mark asks Tareq to care for her. For years, Mark had trusted Tareq with his own life, so it made sense to extend that trust to Juliette's wellbeing.

Once at the hotel, Juliette is alone again. Unwilling to wait quietly for her husband's arrival, every effort she makes to venture out on her own is rebuffed. Cairo is not a gentle city. With a population of 17 million, the noise is unbearable. The heat, mixed with dust, is oppressive. Traffic does not adhere to lanes or stop lights. And women, particularly foreigners, do not easily move about in public alone. Quickly, Juliette learns that the simple activities of

everyday living in Canada, like walking across the street, become a test of wills in Cairo. And so she turns to Tareq who shows her first, Cairo, and then herself.

* * *

Ruba Nadda is nothing if not determined. Producer Daniel Iron of Foundry Films in Toronto had just finished working on Sarah Polley's *Away From Her*, when Nadda found him and gave him the script for ***Cairo Time***. Upon reading it, Iron declared it, "Fantastic. I instantly realized this is someone I want to work with forever." His intuition was sound. "Ruba's previous feature *Sabah* had a lightness to it as a romance; it had a look and feel that matched the script particularly well. The performances were very good and I was impressed with what she was able to do on a miniscule budget. Her other scripts (Nadda is a prolific writer with several completed screenplays standing by) were vastly different from each other, and it was clear that not only is she a smart, careful writer whose work is all character-based, but she's a real filmmaker."

"This is a quiet love story about a woman at a crucial point in her life," said Iron. "She has a private epiphany and things happen to her that no one will ever know. While they are not overtly life changing, they are fundamentally life changing inwardly and this illuminates the world for her. She finds an inner freedom that perhaps she always had, but being a working mother with kids and a husband who was away a lot, never had the opportunity to explore. This is very different from a "my husband and I are having problems so I'm going to have a fling" story. ***Cairo Time*** is beautiful and sad at the same time. The emotions are not clear cut, but there is clarity in their ambiguity."

In 2005, Atom Egoyan had given the screenplay for ***Cairo Time*** to Christine Vachon and Charles Pugliese at Killer Films in New York. Vachon was pleased with the potential of the script, "***Cairo Time*** is a simple and beautiful drama that explores romance from a point of view we haven't really seen before. Couple that with a young, talented writer/director and you have a film that is a perfect fit for Killer Films."

"I was bowled over by the simplicity and elegance of her script and how it managed to be so emotional without being melodramatic," added Pugliese. Once they both met Nadda in person, they were enthusiastic about finding a way to become involved with the project. When Daniel Iron came along and the film was established as a Canadian project, Vachon and Pugliese came on board in the capacity of executive producers.

"Killer is a group I have always dreamed of working with," said Iron. "They have come on to executive produce, consult and help with key casting because their contacts are immense. They've been invaluable in every aspect. Ruba and I discovered that we work in the exact same way that they work in terms of producing and creative collaboration."

The two main challenges of making this film were location, which called for a sophisticated co-production arrangement, and casting a story with only four main characters, two of which carry the film.

Canada has co-production treaties with 80 countries around the world – but not Egypt. Again through Nadda (whom Iron maintains "seems to know everybody in the world because of her film festival attendance."), Iron was introduced to David Collins of Samson Films in Ireland. They had just completed *Once*, which garnered a slew of awards including an Oscar. By teaming up with Samson, and making ***Cairo Time*** a Canada-Ireland co-production, they were allowed to move forward with filming in a third country.

Collins had met Nadda at a film festival in Mannheim and again in Rotterdam. "I liked the fact that her films explore the themes of Muslim/Western relationships in a natural setting. When I read the script for **Cairo Time**, it reminded me of the world created in *Lost in Translation*, with its cross cultural, and ultimately platonic, love story."

CASTING

"Putting together an independent film is all about casting," stated Charles Pugliese. And based on the esteemed track record of Killer Films, this is a statement of substance. The script was sent out to prospective agents and the response was staggering. "Christine, Danny and I had agents aggressively pursuing us, suggesting this movie for their clients. This confirmed our belief that this was an amazing script with a remarkable role for an actress. It's such a beautifully written part for a woman of a certain age and that doesn't come along very often," Pugliese asserted.

Spring, 2008 was good time for casting, what with all three production companies coming off the Academy Awards very favourably: one nomination for Killer's film, *I'm Not There*, two nominations for Foundry Films' *Away From Her*, one Best Score Oscar win for *Once*. The producers' collective pedigree combined with the high quality of the script plus a little kismet resulted in securing the first choice for each character.

Christine Vachon already had a relationship with Patricia Clarkson through the Killer Films productions *Far From Heaven* and *The Safety of Objects*. "Patti is someone we'd worked with before and had great experiences with on both those movies," said Vachon. "Previously, she was cast in very crucial and supporting roles. And now we have the privilege of working with Patti in a lead role. She's been ready for this for years, but it's been a matter of waiting for the right part."

"I think Patti is one of the greatest actors on the planet," declared Iron. "She is, simply put, perfect for this part. It's her first romantic lead where she is in every scene and it is completely and utterly her film. And it was an honour for us to provide her with the opportunity to do this and a godsend for us to have such a great actor in our movie."

Casting Tareq was a similar experience in that the producers went immediately for Alexander Siddig because they needed an actor who, in Iron's words, had the chops to be onscreen with Clarkson. "His acting ability, his intelligence, his gracious refinement, it is almost as if Alexander comes from a different time. He is gentle without falling into the trap of being the sensitive North American male," added Pugliese.

But actually landing Siddig was not so easy. "This gorgeous little script floating into my IN box. I read it and loved it - and told my agent exactly that," recalled Siddig. But the timing was not good as he had accepted another project. The search continued and at the 11th hour, came back to his agent and made the offer again. "Unlike my character who has the Egyptian notion of fate, I don't. The first time around, I had said yes to another project and when this offer came back, I changed my mind, said yes to this one and thank God for that," maintained Siddig.

For the supporting roles of Juliette's husband, Mark, played by Tom McCamus, and Kathryn, the woman Juliette meets in Cairo, played by Elena Anaya, the producers believed they had to be filled by strong actors specifically because the substance and energy of each one is what makes a good movie great. Mark is not just an excuse for Juliette to have an affair and Kathryn is far more than a female shoulder on which Juliette can lean when she is sad.

Juliette

The refrain among actresses 40 and over is well known and legitimate: good roles are hard to find. The solution, according to Oscar-nominated actress Patricia Clarkson, is writer/director Ruba Nadda who has an affinity for writing characters of a certain age. Case in point: Juliette. "This character offers an actress everything," said Clarkson. "Juliette is the woman I always wanted to be. She's an elegant, eloquent and centered woman. It's not just that she's the lead of the film, which is rare; this role is incredibly demanding, incredibly complicated, sexual, sensual, romantic, and intelligent. I mean, I'm 'the girl' in the movie. And I *like* being the girl in the movie. I might not go back to playing anything else."

"I've been asked so many times why I wrote Sabah older and now I am sure I will be asked again!" noted Nadda. *Sabah* is her feature film about a middle-aged Syrian-Canadian woman who finds unexpected (and forbidden) love with a man her family would consider most unsuitable. "Characters always come to me very vividly and almost always in the situation they're in. And I just write it. Juliette came to me - very clearly at first. I saw her older, 50 and I saw that she felt out of sorts in her life, in limbo and almost sad. All these feelings I understood. It would have been a completely different story had Juliette been in 30s (my age) rather than late 40s and most likely less complicated. Maybe it's as simple as I'm an old soul." Nadda's point about a younger character being a less complicated task rings true because older characters never quite lose all the other ages they have been. "These characters enter my mind and demand that they be realized."

Clarkson was struck by the fact that there was something about Juliette that's languid and passionate at the same time. "She's a gracious, kind woman who's free of cynicism," she remarked. "Without being tormented, she is still deeply complicated. Playing Juliette is exhausting because I have to shift down for it which is good for me because everything about me moves at a million miles a minute. There is a real grace about her."

It was the script that attracted Clarkson the project. "This is beautifully written with great simplicity and integrity which is very seductive for me as an actor because people always say that a lot happens in silences - but that takes real craft. Silences are earned," she declared. "In drama, people think you have to undergo a seismic shift in character, but while those are much more lively and noisy, they are not as rewarding. Juliette shifts in quarter inches, in ways that are surprising and that is a real challenge for an actor."

This was Clarkson's first trip to the Middle East and there were odd moments of art imitating life. "It has been an awakening for me, a real journey," she said. "I have been using my fear of the unknown, but once there, I found Cairo to be a beautiful city. I was fortunate to be able to marry my own traveling and the traveling of Juliette and have them come together to aide me in playing this part."

Clarkson shared her on-screen silences with Alexander Siddig, who she declared is "Yummy." She went on to provide details of the yumminess: "He's a tall glass of water with those beautiful eyes, plus he has great character, charm, and talent. These are all the elements you want in your leading man. He arrived and I said to Ruba, 'Are you sure we don't need a sex scene?'"

"I never get what I want and in this movie I totally got what I wanted. It's like a break in the clouds and the sun shone on me," said Nadda. "Juliette is a very tricky role to pull off and Patricia did it. She's an actor and a half, and I think she is the only one who could do it. Juliette has to be sad and happy and she has to fall in love and she can't do any of that over the top. Patti has brought vulnerability, fire and subtlety...and she was always simmering."

Every time we'd shoot something, I'd just want to retire because she was so perfect and I'd think, how can I do this again?"

Tareq

"Tareq has been asked to safeguard Mark's wife," explained actor Alexander Siddig. "This is where both Tareq and Juliette are tested, given free roll of the dice, introduced to each other in the most romantic of settings and both with good reasons not to get involved with each other. I think the fizz that comes off this can of soda is what this film catches. That's exactly where those bubbles are bursting. There are moments where those opportunities are missed and the audience is going to be thinking, 'Go on! Go on! Just destroy everything that you've created for yourselves with someone you don't know!'"

"Juliette is the epitome of Western misunderstanding of Egyptian/Arab/foreign cultures," Siddig continued. "The sheltered upbringing of people in Western countries tends to make them easily shockable. Sometimes it creates a messianic reaction where they want to change the world, at least for a couple of hours, or it turns them into anti-tourists, frightened of their own shadow. Juliette is a little bit of both. Tareq is tired of these people coming and trying to improve things. He sees the problems and he knows how difficult it is to fix them."

On working with Patricia Clarkson, he said, "I've never worked with Katherine Hepburn, but now, having spent time with Patricia, I can safely say that I have. I don't know anyone who is closer in style. She's a great actor. I loved working with her. She's so together, she knows what she's doing, she knows where she's going, and she's very dignified."

Siddig, whose family is from Sudan, one country south of Egypt and also on the Nile, recognizes Tareq as "an old school Arab and the sort of character I just love to play. These people still exist all over the Arab world and they tend to be over 40, although they do exist around the age of 20. For Arab men this age, the virtues of chivalry and honour have always been important because that's how they ran their societies."

"My family and the people I know are not modern in the sense that they do not have enormous American or European influences," Siddig continued. "They've been educated in those countries, but they hang on to their Arabness, for lack of a better word. My father would never dream of doing anything considered dishonourable. I picked from those bones to assemble Tareq, and that Tareq was in the script because Ruba mentioned to me the notion she had about her own father."

On that note, Nadda says she wrote this role for Siddig. Even during principal photography, she was jubilant that he had accepted the part. "I cannot believe he said yes. Alexander is a real Arab Muslim man. And when he talks, it's like... "Dad?" – but I mean it in the most flattering way. I can say that because he's hot, he's beautiful. Together, he and Patricia are sizzling. The chemistry is crazy."

Mark

Juliette's husband, Mark, is talked about throughout the film, but only appears on screen at the end. "He comes in on the 10th round and has to deliver a knockout punch," describes Clarkson about the task actor Tom McCamus had ahead of him. "You need a powerhouse of an actor to do that. He has to convey so much with so little time. And Tom does it with so little effort, but great actors are capable of that."

"I loved this script," said McCamus. "I only have three scenes, but I see Mark as a full character. Because he works for the UN there is a selflessness about him. He cares about

other people. He's very smart, very capable, adventurous, and understanding. But he does get so caught up in what he's doing that he forgets about those close to him and makes assumptions that Juliette should understand this about him. His delay is not a frivolous one. His work is dangerous and there is concern that maybe he never will arrive."

"I think we were married in a past life," declared Nadda about McCamus. "He's such a gentle soul. I've known him forever. Kindred spirits. He is so amazing. He breezes in, does a scene and has us all crying. Tom's role is tough because he comes in at a very pivotal time in the movie, so we are all dying to meet this woman's husband. He's so handsome and dreamy and his eyes are so gorgeous that when he does arrive, you understand how Juliette can be married to him".

Kathryn

The story is rounded out with the character of Kathryn, played by Spanish actress Elena Anaya, a woman who has been traveling for many years and has landed in Cairo in a relationship with a man she doesn't see very much. It is because of her loneliness, and a slight contempt she has developed for the 'petroleum wives' who accompany their husbands in the Middle East, that she befriends Juliette at the Canadian Embassy party.

"When you have been abroad for a long time and you meet someone with whom you feel an immediate kinship, that can be very comforting," Anaya noted. "It's a short relationship she has with Juliette, but it's a nice friendship. They talk about love and lovers. When Kathryn talks about herself, it's like a mirror being held up to Juliette and she starts to see herself differently. She sees she is alone and doesn't want to be. Kathryn opens windows of freedom for Juliette, without knowing what she has done."

Elena Anaya had previously worked with Killer Films on *Savage Grace*. It was a small, pivotal role," attested Pugliese, "and Elena brought much more to the character than any of us even imagined could or would be necessary. It is characters like Kathryn that make for a more truthful, complex, complete story."

Filming in Cairo

Cairo left no one in the cast and crew untouched. At first, the challenges of location work intimidated some, but ultimately, everyone was intoxicated by the experience of being there. Filming a lush, romantic movie would have been easy, but unlike other historical cities such as Morocco or Paris, Cairo isn't pretty. It's gritty (a word that now features prominently in the vocabulary of everyone on the production). Nadda did not want to cover that up by making a 'postcard' movie.

"There is so much in and around Cairo that's iconic," said Producer Daniel Iron. "This is a film in which a woman opens herself up to a city. In addition to the Nile and the Pyramids, there are also enclaves that people don't usually see: the markets, the gardens, the palaces that are so exotic and also so real. Throughout the film we stop seeing them through a foreigner's eyes, but instead through the eyes of someone who is becoming acclimatized and getting into the rhythm of the city that is vibrant, alive, but also completely insane. Cairo is unquestionable one of the great cities of the world."

The locations in Cairo included Groppi, the most celebrated tearoom on the east side of the Mediterranean, El Fishawis, the famous coffee house in the Khan El-Khalili Market, the garden of Mohamed Ali's 200 year old palace, Manesterly Palace on the southern tip of Al-Roda Island, the Mosque-Madrassa of Sultan Hassan built in 1356 AD, and the Kaser el Nil

Bridge (which dates back to 1933). On the outskirts of the city, filming took place at the Pyramids of Giza and then eight hours outside of the city, the cast and crew drove to the White Desert in the Sahara. "This location was a surreal, indescribably beautiful moonscape with limestone mushrooms growing out of the desert floor," said Iron. "Our challenge was to find locations which a tourist would discover as well as those hidden gems which only a real Cairene, who has places he loves, would go."

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In ***Cairo Time***, Juliette expects not only life, but her relationships to run according to a proscribed schedule and when it does not, she is forced to stop, accept life as it is and in the embrace of the city, she embraces the man who shows it to her. "I want people leaving the theatre talking about love, talking about marriage and talking about Cairo," said Ruba Nadda.

MUSIC IN CAIRO TIME

"I love music, especially Arabic music. When I lived in Damascus in my childhood, my dad introduced me to this whole range of Arabic classics and modern music just like he had with western songs of the 50s and 60s. My sister and I would dance to these great songs on our balcony late at night. So in ***Cairo Time***, I wanted to show the world how great Arabic music was. It's so much fun and lively. I used a mix of modern and classic songs. I was so surprised when we actually got permission to use famous songs by Um Kalthoum (also known as the mother of Egypt) and Abdel Halim Hafez. These songs by Um Kalthoum and Abdel Halim Hafez play everywhere in the Middle East and in every coffee shop and taxi cab. I wanted to have a more classic score because it was still partly a western love story. The score was done by an Irish composer, Niall Byrne, who is simply brilliant. I just love this guy. His music is simple, sad, uplifting and addictive. You want to listen to it all the time. We also licensed two songs by Yann Tiersen, whose music I absolutely adore (he did the soundtrack for *Amelie*) and the Everly Brothers. Like Cairo itself, the music in the film is an encounter between Eastern and Western culture." (Ruba Nadda)

CAIRO TIME- ABOUT THE CAST

PATRICIA CLARKSON (Juliette) As an Academy Award nominee and Emmy Award winning actress, Patricia Clarkson takes on roles as varied as the platform in which she plays them. It is that multi faceted approach that has made her one of today's most respected actresses.

Clarkson can currently be seen in Woody Allen's *Whatever Works*, alongside Larry David and Evan Rachel Wood. Clarkson shines as Marietta, Wood's estranged and hilarious mother. The film opened this year's Tribeca Film Festival and was recently released by Sony Picture Classics.

Clarkson will next be seen starring in *Blind Date*, opposite Stanley Tucci. The film tells the story of a separated husband and wife who enact a series of blind dates as their relationship teeters on the brink. The film premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, and will be released by Variance Films later this summer. Following that, is a romantic drama, ***Cairo Time***, in which Clarkson stars as a woman who finds herself in a very unexpected love affair. The film is set against the exotic backdrop of contemporary Cairo and has recently been accepted into the 2009 Toronto International Film Festival. Also this fall, Clarkson will be seen in Martin Scorsese's highly anticipated *Shutter Island*, alongside Leonardo DiCaprio and Sir Ben Kingsley. Paramount will release the film on October 2nd.

Last year, Clarkson received praise for her work in Isabel Coixet's *Elegy* opposite Sir Ben Kingsley, Penelope Cruz and Dennis Hopper, as well as for *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, written and directed by Woody Allen, and for Ira Sachs' *Married Life*, in which she starred opposite Chris Cooper and Pierce Brosnan.

Additional credits include: *Phoebe in Wonderland*, *Lars and the Real Girl*, *All The King's Men*, *Goodnight, and Good Luck*, *The Dying Gaul*, *The Woods*, *Far from Heaven*, *Pieces of April*, *The Station Agent*, *Miracle*, *High Art*, *Dogville*, *Welcome to Collinwood*, *The Pledge*, *The Green Mile*, *Everybody's All-American*, *The Dead Pool*, *Rocket Gibraltar*, *Tune in Tomorrow*, *Joe Gould's Secret*, *Wendigo*, and Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables*, her film debut.

It is Clarkson's continuous innovative work in independent film, which has earned her the 'Independent Award for Acting Excellence' at the 2009 ShoWest Awards.

In 2003, Clarkson's work in two independent films earned her unparalleled recognition. She was nominated for an Academy Award, Golden Globe, SAG Award, Broadcast Film Critics Award and an Independent Spirit Award for her role in *Pieces of April*. In addition, the Sundance Film Festival awarded her the Jury Prize for Outstanding Performance in *Pieces of April*, *The Station Agent*, and *All the Real Girls*. Her performance in *The Station Agent* also earned her a SAG Award nomination for Best Actress and Best Ensemble Cast. The National Board of Review and the National Society of Film Critics named her Best Supporting Actress of the Year for her work in *Pieces of April* and *The Station Agent*.

Clarkson also won Best Supporting Actress awards from the New York Film Critics Circle and National Society of Film Critics for her performance in Todd Haynes' *Far From Heaven*. That role also earned her a nomination from the Chicago Film Critics. Her performance as Greta in Lisa Cholodenko's *High Art* earned her a nomination for an IFP Independent Spirit Award.

On television, Clarkson won an Emmy in 2002 and 2006 for her guest-starring role on HBO's acclaimed drama, [Six Feet Under](#).

Clarkson made her professional acting debut on the New York stage. Her theatre credits include "Eastern Standard" (on and off-Broadway), "Maidens Prayer" (for which she received Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk Award Nominations), "Raised in Captivity," "Oliver Oliver," "The House of Blue Leaves," and "Three Days of Rain." Her regional credits include performances at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, South Coast Repertory, and Yale Repertory.

Born and raised in New Orleans, Clarkson began acting in school plays in her early teens. After studying speech at Louisiana State University for two years, she transferred to Fordham University in New York, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in theatre arts. She earned her MFA at the prestigious Yale School of Drama, where she appeared in "Electra," "Pacific Overtures," "Pericles," "La Ronde," "The Lower Depths," and "The Misanthrope."

It is her love for her home town that has Clarkson continuously and extensively working with numerous Louisiana charities, especially post-Hurricane Katrina. She has lent her time and support to the Louisiana SPCA, and the Louisiana HRC. She has helped with the rebuilding and restoration of Le Petit Theatre (one of the leading community theatres in the nation), and the Mahalia Jackson Theatre at the New Orleans Opera.

Clarkson currently lives in New York.

ALEXANDER SIDDIG (Tareq) is best known for his starring role as 'Dr. Julian Bashir' in the long-running series Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. He made his feature film debut in Stephen Frears' comedy *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*. More recently, Siddig has been seen in Neil Marshall's *Doomsday*, Stephen Gaghan's political thriller, *Syriana*, starring George Clooney, *Reign of Fire*, Ridley Scott's epic *Kingdom of Heaven*, the action-adventure *Vertical Limit*, and BBC's provocative series, "Spooks." In 2007, Siddig returned to the small screen in a recurring role on "24."

Siddig was born in the Sudan and raised there until political turmoil forced his British mother to flee to the U.K. where she sent for him a short time later. His English schooling was financed by his uncle, Malcolm McDowell. Siddig attended university to study geography and anthropology, thinking the future ability to help his native country might lie in the sciences, not on the stage. But during school, he became interested in acting and directing and left university to begin studies at the prestigious London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts.

Being one of the few trained dramatic actors of Arabic descent in London at the time, he was soon cast as a young Palestinian in the television miniseries, The Big Battalions, which led to his winning role as 'Feisal' in A Dangerous Man: Lawrence After Arabia. That movie was subsequently broadcast on American television and his performance caught the attention of Star Trek producer, Rick Berman. On stage, most recently Siddig co-starred in the London West End production of "Whose Life Is It Anyway?" with Kim Cattrall.

TOM MCCAMUS (Mark) One of Canada's most unique and sought-after actors, Tom McCamus has been a long-standing member of the acting ensembles of both the Shaw and Stratford Festivals. Over a period of more than twenty years he has played such roles as 'Peter Pan,' 'Richard the Third,' 'Mack the Knife,' 'King Arthur,' 'Vladimir,' 'Edmund Tyrone' and 'Hamlet' to name a few.

Most recently Tom starred in "Misery" (Canadian Stage), "An Ideal Husband" and "The Comedy of Errors" (Stratford Festival) "The Unanswered Question" (NAC), "Thom Paine: Based on Nothing" (Tarragon Theatre), and "Mathilde" (Nightwood Theatre) for which he was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award. Other recent favourites include 'Darryl Plate' in "The Innocent Eye Test" (Mirvish Productions) and 'Lovborg' in "Hedda Gabler" (Volcano). McCamus received the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Best Actor for his performance in Theatre Plus' production of "Abundance." He returns to Stratford in 2009 in "The Three Sisters", "Phedre" and "Bartholomew's Fair".

In the world of feature film McCamus won the Genie Award for Best Actor for his work in David Wellington's feature film *I Love a Man in Uniform* and received a Best Actor nomination for Wellington's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, in which he reprised his role as Edmund Tyrone from the Stratford Festival's critically-acclaimed production. A role in Atom Egoyan's feature film, *The Sweet Hereafter*, earned Mr. McCamus a Best Supporting Actor Genie nomination.

Recent film credits include *Shake Hands With the Devil* (Barna Alper), *Killshot* (MGM), *Heyday!* (Pope Productions), *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen* (Disney Pictures), *Ginger Snaps: The Prequel* (40th Parallel), *Perfect Pie* (Rhombus), *Possible Worlds* (In Extremis Images), *Century Hotel* (Victorious Films), and *Beautiful Dreamers*.

On the small screen, his performance in Waking Up Wally (Accent Entertainment) garnered him a Gemini award for Best Actor. He is featured in the Gary Burns' series Northern Town (CBC) and played a leading role in the series Mutant X (Fireworks Entertainment). Recent

guest appearances include Aaron Stone and The Murdoch Mysteries (Shaftsbury Films) and Clean (Showcase).

ELENA ANAYA (Kathryn) was born in Palencia, Spain in 1975. As long as she can remember, she dreamt of being an actress. When she was 18 she decided to make her dream come true and started taking acting classes. Shortly after being accepted at Madrid Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RESAD) she auditioned for and won the title role in *Africa*, obtaining critical and popular acclaim.

Africa was followed by Fernando Leon's *Familia*. Since then, Elena has made some 35 movies, with some of Spain's most esteemed directors, including Pedro Almodovar, Julio Medem, Agustin Diaz Yanes, etc. With Medem, Elena made *Sex and Lucia*, which won her a Spanish Academy Award nomination and the Spanish Screen Actors' Guild Best Actress award. Elena's credits include *Talk to Her*, *No News From God*, *Alatriste*, *Dead Fish*, *Van Helsing*, *In The Land of Women* and, more recently *Hierro* by Gabe Ibañez. She is presently preparing another movie with Julio Medem, *Room In Rome*.

Elena has twice taken roles in the theater, at the National Theater in "Homebody Kabul" by Tony Kushner and in an international tour of "Together".

CAIRO TIME - ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

RUBA NADDA (Writer/Director) is a writer, director and producer living in Toronto. **Cairo Time** is her second feature film that she has written and directed, preceded by *Sabah* (starring Arsinee Khanjian 2005); as well as 13 short films: *Aadan* (2004), *Blue turning grey over you* (1999), *Black September* (1999), *I Would Suffer Cold Hands for You* (1999), *Laila* (1999), *Slut* (1999), *Damascus Nights* (1998), *The Wind Blows Towards Me Particularly* (1998) *So Far Gone* (1998) *Do Nothing* (1997), *Wet Heat Drifts Through the Afternoon* (1997), *Interstate Love Story* (1997) and *Lost Woman Story* (1997).

Ruba attended New York's prestigious Tisch School of the Arts in Film Production. She completed their summer program and upon her return to Toronto immediately began her prolific filmmaking career. Her 13 short films have been shown over 500 times in film festivals around the world. She has had over 20 retrospectives of her work shown in numerous cities, including: Princeton University, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Vienna, Wurzburg, Austin, San Francisco, Regina, Edmonton, Ottawa, and Toronto.

She is also a fiction writer, with short stories published in over 200 international journals, such as *Riversedge Journal*, *West Wind Review* 18th Anthology, *The Sounds of Poetry*, *Blood & Aphorism*, *White Wall Review*, *Room of One's Own* and *Wascana Review*.

She is currently working on her next two pictures *Abu Muna* and *An October Gale* with Daniel Iron as producer and Christine Vachon as Executive Producer.

DANIEL IRON (Producer) After graduating from Osgoode Hall Law School in 1987, Daniel Iron was legal counsel at Telefilm Canada for five years. He joined and eventually became a partner at Rhombus Media where he produced the acclaimed feature film, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, directed by David Wellington, as well as co-producing the Oscar-winning *The Red Violin* from Francois Girard, and producing the award-winning *Last Night*, directed by Don McKellar as well as McKellar's *Childstar*. Iron also executive produced Guy Maddin's *Saddest Music in the World*, Jennifer Baichwal's acclaimed documentary, *Let It Come Down*:

The Life of Paul Bowles and Peter Wellington's *Luck*. At Rhombus, Iron was also producer on numerous television production, including *The Four Seasons* and *Don Giovanni Unmasked*, two performing arts films, the Gemini-nominated series Foreign Objects, written and directed by Ken Finkleman, *Stormy Weather: The Music of Harold Arlen*, a performance/documentary directed by Larry Weinstein, *Elizabeth Rex*, a television film based on Timothy Findley's play, the acclaimed Slings and Arrows, a six part comedic television series, and *Beethoven's Hair*, a documentary directed by Larry Weinstein.

In January 2004, Daniel left Rhombus to create his own production company, Foundry Films Inc. Foundry has produced Northern Town, a CBC series set and shot in the Yukon, It's Me Gerald, a six half-hour series for Showcase and in 2005 *Last Exit*, a TV movie with CTV directed by John Fawcett). In 2006 he produced *Manufactured Landscapes* the theatrical documentary on acclaimed photographer, Edward Burtynsky, directed by Jennifer Baichwal which won best Canadian film at Toronto International Film Festival, the Toronto Film Critics Association Awards for Best Canadian Film and Best Documentary of 2006 as well a Genie for Best Documentary. The team has also now completed a third documentary, entitled *Act of God*, which is in current theatrical release. Daniel also produced Sarah Polley's debut feature *Away From Her* starring Julie Christie and Olympia Dukakis, which was released in the US by Lionsgate in May, 2007 and garnered six Gemini awards and two Academy Award Nominations. Daniel acted as executive producer of *Fido*, a large budget feature by Anagram Pictures in Vancouver. Daniel's most recently completed production is ***Cairo Time***, written and directed by Ruba Nadda and starring Patricia Clarkson and Alexander Siddig. Daniel has just wrapped production on *The Bang Bang Club*, starring Ryan Phillippe, Taylor Kitsch and Malin Akerman, a South-African co-production written and directed by Steven Silver and *Act of Dishonour*, shot on location in Tajikistan. As well, Iron is developing numerous other feature and television productions.

DAVID COLLINS (Producer) Managing Director of Samson Films, one of Ireland's leading independent film and television drama production companies, co-founded Strongbow Film & Television Productions with John Kelleher in 1985. The company's productions include *Eat The Peach*, the Channel 4 television series When Reason Sleeps and the Revcom/ABC production Act of Betrayal.

Collins also co-founded Radius Television, one of Ireland's largest independent TV companies, producing over 60 hours a year of new programming for Irish and overseas broadcasters.

He is Chairman of Film Makers Ireland, the representative association for Irish producers and directors, and he is also on the board of directors of Ireland's EU MEDIA Desk and the recently established Irish Screen Commission. He is also a member of the European Film Academy and a board member of the Film Institute of Ireland.

Samson has been awarded Incentive Funding by the European Script Fund and has a wide range of film and television projects in active development. Recently Collins has established a joint venture television drama company with Ed Guiney of Temple Films to specialize in long-running drama series for the international market. This company has been provided Company Development Funding by the Media II Programme.

Samson has developed strong links with many of the major film and television funding agencies in Ireland, the UK and Europe. In the last five years, Samson has produced and co-produced film and television projects with funding from, among others, Universal Pictures, British Sky Broadcasting, Channel Four, the Irish Film Board, the Northern Irish Film Commission, BBC Television, BBC Worldwide, British Screen, Eurimages, RTÉ, and has accessed significant funding from private Irish investors.

In addition to its own production portfolio Samson has worked in production partnership with a wide variety of independents through Europe, including Road Movies (Germany), Parallax (UK), Zephyr Films (UK), Victoria Film (Scandinavia), Fandango (Italy) and The Shooting Gallery (New York).

Samson also provides budgeting, location and logistical support on a regular basis to incoming feature films and television series, and can access funding where appropriate from the Irish Film Board, RTÉ as well as from Section 481 incentive pools.

Collins' recent feature film credits include: *Little Foxes*, *Eden*, *Once*, *True North*, *Asylum*, *Blind Flight*, *The Honeymooners* and *The Abduction*. Television credits include: *Dan & Becks*," "Bachelors Walk," "Hide and Seek," "Pure Mule," and "Watermelon."

CHRISTINE VACHON (Executive Producer) Christine Vachon produced Todd Haynes' controversial first feature, *POISON*, which was awarded the Grand Jury prize at the 1991 Sundance Film Festival. Since then, she has gone on to produce some of the most acclaimed American independent films including *Far From Heaven* (nominated for four Academy Awards), *Boys Don't Cry* (Academy Award winner), *One Hour Photo*, *Hedwig and The Angry Inch*, *Happiness*, *Velvet Goldmine*, *Safe*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*, *Go Fish*, and *Swoon*. Christine, along with partner Pamela Koffler, runs Killer Films.

Recent Killer releases include Todd Haynes' *I'm Not There*, starring Christian Bale, Cate Blanchett, Richard Gere, Heath Ledger, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Julianne Moore, and Michelle Williams. Cate Blanchett received both Academy Award and SAG Award nominations for Best Supporting Actress, and the film was also nominated for 4 Independent Spirit Awards, notching a Best Supporting Actress win for Cate Blanchett.

Christine also produced Oscar-winning actress Helen Hunt's directorial debut, *Then She Found Me*, starring Hunt, Colin Firth, Bette Midler, and Matthew Broderick; and Tom Kalin's *Savage Grace*, starring Julianne Moore and Stephen Dillane, which premiered in official selection of Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival. Consolidating her foray into original television movies with the 11 Emmy nominations of *Mrs Harris*, Christine produced *An American Crime* (world premiere on Showtime), a true-crime drama starring Catherine Keener, Ellen Page and James Franco, with Keener getting an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Lead Actress in a mini-series or a movie.

In 1994, Christine was awarded the Frameline Award for Outstanding Achievement in Lesbian and Gay Media and, in 1996, with the prestigious Music Award for Outstanding Vision and Achievement by New York Women In Film And Television. For her work on *Far From Heaven*, she was honored by the New York Film Critics Circle, and received the Producer of the Year Award from the National Board of Review. Killer's movies have received multiple awards and nominations from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences (the Oscars), the Emmy Awards, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (the Golden Globes), and the Independent Spirit Awards. Christine and Killer have also received special tributes from the South By Southwest, Cinequest, Provincetown, Rhode Island, Woodstock, Deauville and, most recently, the Locarno Film Festivals. Most notable, on the occasion of Killer's 10th anniversary in 2005, the company was feted with a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art.

Christine is the author of two books: *A Killer Life: How An Independent Producer Survives Deals And Disasters In Hollywood And Beyond* (Simon and Schuster, 2006); and *Shooting To Kill: How An Independent Producer Blasts Through The Barriers To Make Movies That Matter* (Avon, 1998). Both books were Los Angeles Times bestsellers.

CHARLES PUGLIESE (Executive Producer) is currently the head of development at Killer Films, where he has been for over six years. In addition to ***Cairo Time***, Charles recently co-produced Jordan Scott's *Cracks*, starring Eva Green and Juno Temple and Matt Aselton's *Gigantic*, starring Paul Dano, Zooey Deschanel and John Goodman, which premiered at the 2008 Toronto Film Festival.

In 2007, Charles co-produced Todd Haynes' acclaimed film concerning Bob Dylan, *I'm Not There*, which starred Cate Blanchett, Christian Bale, Richard Gere and Heath Ledger. The film was nominated for an Academy Award and won the Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actress. Prior to that, Charles associate produced Douglas McGrath's *Infamous*, which starred Toby Jones, Sandra Bullock and Daniel Craig.

In addition to his feature film duties, Charles heads up Killer's new television division, developing and pitching TV projects to network and cable venues. Charles is a graduate of Vassar College and began his career in the production and acquisitions departments of Miramax Films.

CLAIRE WELLAND (Co-Producer)

Claire Welland has worked on a remarkable range of feature films, television and documentary projects. Her work has taken her on location to Sri Lanka, Malta, and Morocco. And most recently Egypt and South Africa.

Claire began her career producing a number of high profile documentary series for Turner Broadcasting, Discovery Channel and Canal Plus.

Her past projects include the critically acclaimed feature film *Water that was* nominated for an Academy Award for best foreign film. Recent Feature films include Paramount Vantage's *How She Move*, and *Cry of the Owl* starring Julia Stiles. In Television, ABC's 4-hour TV mini-series, *The Path to 9/11* tracing intelligence gathering from the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing to the tragic events of 9/11. She has also worked on television productions for Showtime, Paramount and Columbia Tri-Star.

Most recently, she co-produced *The Bang Bang Club*, with Ryan Phillippe, Taylor Kitsch and Malin Ackerman chronicling combat photographers in the last days of apartheid. Claire joined Daniel Iron as a partner in Foundry Films this year.

LUC MONTPELLIER (Director of Photography) Images created by award-winning Director Of Photography Luc Montpellier have entertained and provoked feature film audiences, festival cinephiles and television viewers for over a decade. From the textured dramatic palettes of Ken Finkleman's *Foreign Objects*, to the dream-like images of Guy Maddin's *The Saddest Music in the World*, starring Isabella Rossellini, Luc's vision is timeless and poignant, illustrating a mature balance between art and technology, freedom and form. His touch has elevated the successes of feature films like the award winning *Khaled* (Ashgar Massombagi), which earned Montpellier The Haskell Wexler award for Best Cinematography at the Woodstock Film Festival and the gambling adventure *Luck*, directed by Peter Wellington, which won Best Narrative Feature at the South by Southwest Film Festival in Austin Texas. Montpellier's reputation is punctuated as much by the finished images on the screen as by the vital approach he brings to process. Select credits include: *Sabah*, directed by Ruba Nadda, a love story starring Arsinée Khanjian and Shawn Doyle; *The Cry of the Owl*, directed by Jamie Thraves, the biopic mini-series Hemmingway vs. Callaghan, directed

by Michael DeCarlo that earned Montpellier a Gemini Award for Best Photography in a Drama; the comedy *Confessions a Sociopathic Social Climber* (Dana Lustig) starring Jennifer Love Hewitt; Ken Finkleman's *At The Hotel* for CBC; Clement Virgo's feature *Poor Boy's Game*; Sarah Polley's *Away From Her*, and Paolo Barzman's *Emotional Arithmetic* starring Gabriel Byrne, Susan Sarandon and Christopher Plummer.

NIALL BYRNE (Composer)

Niall studied Piano and Composition at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. He was awarded first prize at the 1992 Dublin Film Festival's music competition, chaired by composer Michael Nyman. Since then he has composed music for feature films and television dramas both in Ireland and abroad. With support from the Irish Arts council, he attended seminars on film music by Ennio Morricone at the Chigiana Music school in Sienna, Italy. He has received four IFTA award nominations for Best Music. Website: www.niallbyrnecomposer.com

TAMARA CONBOY (Production Designer) is a prominent young Irish designer. As an Honours graduate from one of Ireland's leading Art colleges, she has found her niche in the world of film and television.

Her career has been varied, ranging from interactive multi-media in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin, to designing a complete range of baby and children's clothing for Dunnes Stores, a major European chain-store.

Tamara has always encouraged film education and indeed has herself been involved in various workshops with organisations such as Film Base and Moonstone International.

The main focus of her last 13 years has been in the world of film and television. She has worked in the capacity of graphic designer and Art director on a variety of projects including *Space Truckers*, *The Medallion*, *In America*, *Bloom*, *King Arthur* and *Isolation*.

Tamara has worked with a number of designers and directors of international renown.

She has now begun designing herself full time, with projects such as *Once* giving her this opportunity.

BRENDA BROER (Costume Designer) studied fashion design at Ryerson 1988 and got her first taste of costume designing for McGill's Savoy Society while studying at College LaSalle 1992. Her historical knowledge, combined with her costume design, production skills, and fashion savvy has led her to work in a wide variety of genres and productions in theatre, dance, feature film and television. Brenda's credits include Deepa Mehta's *Heaven on Earth*, Peter Wellington's *Luck*, *Clutch*, directed by Chris Grismer, *Hurt*, directed by Steve diMarco and *Lepidultrous*, directed by James Cooper.

TERESA HANNIGAN (Editor) In her role as editor, Teresa has had the good fortune to work on many highly acclaimed film and television productions. There is a diversity of theme and genre in the projects she has helped to shape, which include the arts documentary, *Artemisia*; some of Canada's best television drama including the Gemini winning series *The Eleventh Hour* and the CTV mini-series *Would Be Kings*, for which she won a 2008 Directors Guild of Canada award for outstanding picture editing; and TV movies and feature films including *Playing House* and *Sabah*.