



Presents



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92 minutes | Colour | Canada | English | 2019

LOGLINE

A newly appointed Film Festival Director must overcome his dysfunctional staff and his oversized ego to save his festival's funding.

SYNOPSIS

OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS is an improvised feature comedy about a small film festival with big problems. Desmond Baggs, the new film festival Executive Director must overcome sabotage and betrayal to make sure his film festival isn't destroyed by the Festival Programmer, the invited filmmakers, or the Canadian Arts Council.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES



Open for Submissions tells the story of an embattled film festival team picking up the pieces after the death of the festival Executive Director. Competing visions fracture already frayed relationships, and those on the losing end seek vengeance. Many of the scenes are adaptations from my own experiences as both a festival-going filmmaker and as an Arts Administrator. When I started working with the wonderful writer Stacey Ashworth, I wanted to concentrate on a funny character driven plot that had some snarky critiques of the Canadian arts and film system, but while writing and shooting it, the Trump era began.

In the story, unthinkingly, the Festival Programmer exploits the biggest fissures present in contemporary society - the competing narratives of "the culture wars" - while not knowing that the festival itself is under threat of losing its funding. So without losing sight on the personal conflicts, the competing narratives of identity politics became a focus in the film, and I really wanted this to be a source of comedy rather than another reason for further political entrenchment and tribal allegiance.

Open for Submissions was shot from a thirty page scene outline, with the cast improvising all the dialogue. I wrote most of the lead parts with the actors in mind (as I like revisiting long standing working artistic relationships) so they had an idea of the tone, which given a 9 day principle shooting schedule was crucial. I worked with my two talented DPs (I call the "two Dans", Daniel Carruthers and Daniel Hogg) to ensure this felt like a real documentary as much as possible, without the camera leading the action and minimal dramatic artifice. I am very proud of the film and am happy with how audiences are responding to it.



BRYAN SKINNER

Director, Co-Writer

Bryan Skinner is an award-winning narrative and documentary film director, producer, writer, and editor. His feature film debut, *Open for Submissions*, is currently on the festival circuit and has earned the Best Feature Film Award at the Forest City Film Festival in London, Ontario.

A graduate of Vancouver Film School, Skinner's short film, *Tumbling After*, screened internationally and won the Jury Prize in the Waterford Film Festival, Ireland.

Skinner has also worked as an Arts Administrator for over ten years and is the former Executive Director of CineVic Society of Independent Filmmakers. He is also known for his work in the Victoria music scene, and much like the Open for Submissions character Booker, is often found spinning records at various venues in Victoria.



ANA DE LARA

Producer

Ana de Lara is a film producer, director, and screenwriter, with a background as an actor and stand-up comic. She has garnered over thirty accolades for her films and screenplays, including the Whistler Film Festival MPPIA Award (*Good Girls Don't*) and the Telefilm New Voices Award (*The Virgin Mary Had a Little Lamb*).

De Lara's films have screened worldwide, most notably in the Academy-qualifying Montreal World Film Festival, Raindance Film Festival, Rhode Island International Film Festival, and The Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival, where she was presented the 2018 Spirit Award. She is an alumnus of Telefilm Talent to Watch and the Women in the Director's Chair.



STACEY ASHWORTH

Co-Writer

Stacey Ashworth is a Canadian screenwriter and director with her BFA in Creative Writing from the University of Victoria, and her MFA in Screenwriting from the University of Texas at Austin.

Ashworth has had her scripts optioned in Los Angeles and in Victoria, BC, and has been awarded script development funds by Telefilm. Her directorial debut, *No Breath Play*, which she also wrote, screened internationally and won the Victoria Film Festival's Audience Award for Best Short Film.

KEY CREW

Directors of Photography	DAN CARRUTHERS
	DANIEL HOGG
Production Designer	JOYCE KLINE
Re-Recording Mixer	DAVID PARFIT
Sound Designer	PATRICK COBLE
Editor	BRYAN SKINNER
Costume Designer	JAMES INSELL

CAST

Desmond	JOHN EMMET TRACY
Booker	TYLER LIONEL PARR
Denise	KASSIANNI AUSTIN
Celina	JOHANNAH NEWMARCH
Allison	ROBYN THOMAS
Al Jams	CHRIS MACKIE
Sarah	ANDREA MARIE
Melanie	MIA GOLDEN
Bronson	PAUL BESTITO
Carter	OCTAVIAN KAUL
Phil	TREVOR HINTON
Liza	ALEXA ROWE
Lori	JASMINE TOOMBS
Robert	BILL CHRISTIE
Barry	CHRIS GABLE
Eileen	CONNIE MCCONELL
Linda	JOANNE WILSON
Rabbi Mo	SHAUGHNESSY REDDEN
Allison's Mom	TRACY ROATH
Sunshine	ANA DE LARA
Ellen	STEF DOLAN
Nel	FINN SKINNER
Bartholomew	MORGAN CRANNY
Mai	CAMILLE NAGASAKI
Radio DJ	BRYAN CAPISTRANO
Reporter	LEANNE ALLEN
Alt-Right Man	LEIGH PHILIPS
Alt-Right Woman	LORNNA OLSON
Sound Guy	JUSTIN LEE
Otherkin #1	LENA VORONTSOVA
Otherkin #2	CARMAN KLEIN