

Strand Releasing presents

LILTING

A film by HONG KHAOU

Starring Ben Wishaw, Cheng Pei Pei & Andrew Leung

Official Selection:

Sundance Film Festival 2014 – Winner, Best Cinematography Award

Hong Kong International Film Festival 2014

Seattle International Film Festival 2014

Frameline San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival 2014

Outfest Los Angeles 2014

Newfest New York 2014

Country of Origin: United Kingdom

Format: HD Digital/2.35/Color

Sound Format: 5.1 Surround Sound

Running Time: 91 minutes

Genre: Drama

Not Rated

In English and Mandarin with English Subtitles

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SYNOPSIS

Set in contemporary London, **LILTING** features intensely moving performances by Asian cinema's martial arts legend Cheng Pei Pei (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) as Junn, a Cambodian-Chinese mother grieving the untimely death of her only son Kai (Andrew Leung), and Ben Whishaw (*I'm Not There, Bright Star*) as her son's lover, Richard.

Set in her old-fashioned ways and not fully adjusted to the foreign culture she lives in, the mother's fragile world is suddenly disrupted by the presence of a stranger (Whishaw) whose attempts to communicate are first met with rejection and distrust. Although they don't share a common language, Vann (Naomi Christie), a young translator hired by Richard, helps piece together the tender memories of the man they both loved, and the two strangers gradually learn to develop a bond with each other. Vann also helps Junn go through the somewhat comical courtship of a smitten English gentleman. Graceful, moving and humorous, **LILTING** is a gem of a chamber piece about unlikely connections and how loss can bring us together even when cultures and generations set us far apart from one another.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The idea for this story started with my family. We were political refugees from Cambodia, arriving in England in the 1980s. My mother wanted to give her children the opportunity for a future. Being young, we were able to fully assimilate into a new life, culture and language. Regrettably, she wasn't able to integrate so easily and to this day, after 30 odd years, is still unable to master the English language. I took this premise as an idea and ran with it. I imagined what it would be like if her lifeline to the outside world was gone - how would she cope?

So language became an integral motif in the story. I wanted to use it as an analogy to comment on communication, particularly the flip side of that. We all know communication brings about understanding and bridges cultural differences. What you also get is that it is equally destructive, with conflicts arising out of it.

I've always wanted to use 'the translator' as a narrative device, because I spent so much of my childhood translating TV shows for my mum. The concern was whether this technique would hold up throughout the film because of the repetition. In the workshop I felt it could work: if the scene was engaging then there was nothing to fear. What you get with this technique is at certain screenings where you have a mixed audience, with some people who are able to understand Mandarin, it creates this lovely dynamic in which a section of the audience reacts and responds earlier than others. I love it when this happens. It's so nice to see as I feel in some ways it places them in the shoes of the characters.

A big influence for me was John Sayles' film, *Lone Star*. I love his works; an incredible filmmaker. I like the way he blurred the timelines in that film. I thought the tone was just impeccable and I remembered desperately wanting to emulate that in *Lilting*.

I remember precisely the moment I decided to write *Lilting*. Three years ago, my short film was showing at Sundance (2011), I maxed out on all my credit cards in order to go. It turned out to be the most inspiring film festival I've been to. It really affected me; I remembered telling myself that I must make a film before turning 40. The journey getting here has been punishing and tremendous in every sense. I don't think I slept during filming. It now feels wonderfully fitting to have the World Premiere at Sundance - three years exactly to the day when I was there, which galvanized me to write *Lilting*.

DIRECTOR - HONG KHAOU

Hong Khaou participated in various writers' attachment programs with The Royal Court, Polka Theatre, Dende Collective and Yellow Earth Theatre. He was part of the BBC / Royal Court New Writing Initiatives, where 50 emerging writers were chosen across the country to take part in in-house writing opportunities for various departments within the BBC and Royal Court Theatre.

Hong spent seven years at an independent film distribution company, Peccadillo Pictures, managing their Home Entertainment department. He also regularly attended film festivals and film markets as part of the acquisitions team.

Hong has written and directed two short films, *Summer* and *Spring*. *Spring* (2011) had its World Premiere at the Sundance Film Festival and European Premiere at the Berlin Film Festival. *Summer* (2006), premiered at the Berlin Film Festival.

His debut feature, *Lilting*, was produced through Film London's Microwave scheme.

In 2013 Hong Khaou was named as one of the 'Stars of Tomorrow' in Screen International.

PRODUCER – DOMINIC BUCHANAN

Selected as the only producer to appear in Screen Daily's 'Stars of Tomorrow 2012' and subsequently appearing in 2013 Screen Daily's 'Future Leader: Producer' list, Dominic has forged an in-depth career in the UK film industry. He has worked in acquisitions and production at the London office of The Weinstein Company, Universal Pictures International in the co-productions and acquisitions department and Qwerty Films, under UK film producer Michael Kuhn, amassing a quality slate. *Gimme The Loot* was his first feature as a producer (which won the Grand Jury Prize at SXSW, then had its International debut at Cannes in *Un Certain Regard*). His most recent feature, *Lilting*, has secured UK distribution via Artificial Eye. Buchanan is now working on a Film4.0 project commissioned by Anna Higgs. Dominic was appointed Head of Film at Stink in May 2012 and is committed to making films that audiences can enjoy and be challenged by.

CAST

BEN WHISHAW

Ben Whishaw trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, graduating spring 2003. In 1999, prior to drama school, Ben played important supporting roles in two films, *The Trench* (Arts Council/Studio Canal dir. William Boyd) and *Mauvaise Passé* (Pathe/Studio Canal dir Michel Blanc). He also played the title role in *My Brother Tom* (Film Four dir. Dom Rotheroe). After graduation, he went on to appear in *Enduring Love*, a film adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel directed by Roger Michell, and *Layer Cake*, a feature directed by Matthew Vaughan.

Ben subsequently made his West End debut at the National Theatre in their stage adaptation of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* and starred as Hamlet in Trevor Nunn's electric 'youth' version of the play at the Old Vic, for which he has received tremendous critical acclaim and a Laurence Olivier nomination.

In 2006, Ben went on to play the lead character Grenouille in Tom Tykwer's highly acclaimed *Perfume*. In the same year he also shot *Stoned* and *I'm Not There*, Todd Haynes' film portrayal of Bob Dylan's life alongside the likes of Cate Blanchett, Richard Gere and Christian Bale.

Ben played Sebastian Flyte in the film version of *Brideshead Revisited* (2008), which was released to critical acclaim. Ben starred in the hugely popular BBC drama *Criminal Justice*, which saw him pick up the award for best actor at the 2009 Royal Television Society Awards, 'Best Actor' at the International Emmy Awards 2009 and was nominated for 'Best Actor' at the 2009 BAFTA Television Awards. He also played the lead role in *The Idiot* at the National Theatre. Ben starred as John Keats in Jane Campion's *Bright Star* and took the lead role in Mike Bartlett's play, *Cock*, at The Royal Court Theatre. Ben then played Ariel opposite Helen Mirren and Russell Brand in *The Tempest*.

In 2012, Ben went on to star as Freddie Lyon in *The Hour* for the BBC opposite Dominic West and Romola Garai. This was followed by the lead role in the BBC's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Richard II* and then as Q in the most recent Bond, *Skyfall*, alongside Daniel Craig. In the same year, Ben starred alongside an all-star cast including Tom Hanks and Halle Berry in *Cloud Atlas*. 2013 saw Ben return to the stage alongside *Skyfall* co-star Judi Dench in *Peter and Alice*. He then appeared in *The Zero Theorem* with Matt Dillon. Ben will next be seen in Ron Howard's recent project *In the Heart of the Sea*.

CHENG PEI PEI

Cheng Pei Pei is one of Asian cinema's martial arts legends and Hong Kong's first action heroine. A household name in Asia, Pei Pei gained immense popularity when she starred in the Shaw Brothers highly influential *Come Drink With Me* (1966). Many other films followed establishing her as Hong Kong's 'Queen of Swords'. Today, Western audiences remember her best for her role as the wicked Jade Fox in Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger*

Hidden Dragon, for which she won a Best Supporting Actress Award at the 2001 Hong Kong Film Awards.

Pei Pei's other recent credits include *House of Harmony* and *Naked Weapon* opposite Maggie Q; *Streetfighter*, *The Legend of Chun Li* for 20th Century Fox, and numerous Chinese films like *Yang Sisters*, *Speed Angels* and *Here Comes Fortune* opposite Alan Tam and Miriam Yeung for China Film Group.

Pei Pei has also starred in several Chinese television series including *Mulan* for CCTV, and the epic series *The Patriot Yue Fei* opposite Huang Xiaoming, which became the first Chinese series to be broadcast on HBO.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY - ULA PONTIKOS

As a Cinematography graduate of the NFTS, Ula has gone on to photograph numerous award-winning films, promos and documentaries. Her films have been screened at the Berlin Film Festival, Sundance and Camerimage. Her recent feature *Weekend* won many awards including two BIFAs. Ula's other credits are *The Minor Character* starring David Tennant for Sky Arts Playhouse as well as *Run*, starring Olivia Colman for Channel 4 with director Charles Martin.

Earlier this year Ula shot Debbie Tucker Green's *Second Coming* and the Cold War spy drama series *The Game* for the BBC.

LILTING AND FILM LONDON MICROWAVE

The 5th round of Film London Microwave opened in 2011 and received 93 applications. 12 filmmaking teams were short-listed to participate in Microschool, a four day intensive program of seminars and workshops. This was followed by four months of development support, ending with a final pitching session where the successful projects were greenlit – *Lilting* was one of three. The development period then continued to polish scripts, work on budgets, schedules, locations and casting. The Microwave scheme provides support and professional mentoring from the initial conception all the way through to the project's release.

Adrian Wootton, Chief Executive of Film London and the British Film Commission:

"*Lilting* is a beautifully moving, cinematic achievement and I am extremely proud of what Hong and Dominic have delivered. The scheme exists to discover and nurture London's filmmaking talent and I believe the success of *Lilting* – and our previous films – is in part testament to Microwave's innovative approach, via Microschool, and providing access to the expertise of respected industry professionals and of course our fantastic team."

Lilting was a stand out from the start, as Mia Bays, Film London Microwave's Creative Producer explains:

"Film London had supported Hong Khaou from the start of his career, funding two shorts he made prior to his debut feature, so he was on my radar. As soon as I read the

script and saw his reel, I knew this was a special proposition, and the team felt the same. All the way through Microschool the buzz from the mentoring team Clio Barnard, Peter Ettedgui and Colin Pons was also strong.

“The film progressed even further with our development program, and the greenlight was a unanimous decision. Hong has a very special take on the material, and it was vital to back him all the way along with producer Dominic Buchanan. This was one of the most rewarding development experiences of my career, and all the way, through production and the edit, it’s been a real joy to work on, because it has such depth. I’m very proud of what we all achieved.”

Microwave provides mentoring throughout the process, with director Clio Barnard (*The Selfish Giant, The Arbor*) and producer Peter Ettedgui (*Unmade Beds, Kinky Boots*) on hand to offer advice to Hong during Microschool and through to picture lock.

Hong Khaou, writer/director *Lilting*:

“It was important to have Film London's support and infrastructure to help make *Lilting*. We certainly benefited from their care and influence. I loved having Clio Bernard and Peter Ettedgui at hand to examine the script and advised how best to further strengthen it. I really cherish the time at Microschool, and feel that was when the script found its feet. There was a lot of love and protection from everyone; the mentors, Mia Bays and Film London all helped us through that process.”

Producer Dominic Buchanan was mentored by producer Ken Marshall (*Filth, London to Brighton*).

Dominic Buchanan, producer *Lilting*:

“Film London's Microschool allowed Hong to flourish, his help from directing mentor Clio Barnard, in conjunction with Peter Ettedgui, his writing mentor, truly afforded Hong the correct environment – set up by Film London Microwave – to hone in on what made the script work.”

“Ken Marshall proved to be a great producing mentor for me, and ultimately this production. He was a great soundboard and furthered my thinking and ability to handle all sorts of crisis. *Lilting* has been the perfect project and has given me the opportunity to prove myself as a producer. This film tested both Hong’s and my skills, patience and creativity as filmmakers on a daily basis.”

Clio Barnard, writer/director mentor:

“I was very impressed by the complexity of the themes in *Lilting* when I read the first draft of the screenplay. Then when I saw Hong’s short films I knew that he was an incredibly talented filmmaker who would realize it brilliantly. My next encounter with *Lilting* was when I saw the fine cut just before Hong locked picture – and I think I cried

pretty much all the way through. It's a very beautiful film and Hong is an incredibly talented filmmaker."

Ken Marshall, producer mentor:

"My involvement in *Lilting* was an easy choice once I had met Dominic and Hong. Not only are they both good, talented people but they possessed a beautiful script that moved me to tears – a script I was jealous wasn't my own! I knew that *Lilting* would be an important film to bring to life, and therefore I knew it would be important for me to do what I could to support Dom in any way possible as a mentor and fellow producer. Producing can sometimes be a lonely job and I'm very pleased that Dom and I got a chance to work together. My role as mentor was one of sharing the common goal: helping get *Lilting* closed, into production and realized. As I suspected, the film has done the script justice and it is now getting the attention and success it deserves."

ABOUT FILM LONDON MICROWAVE

Launched in 2006, Film London Microwave has established itself as the premier talent development scheme for emerging feature filmmaking talent based in London.

Set up by Film London with BBC Films and support from Creative Skillset, Film London Microwave is committed to discovering and investing in ambitious London-based filmmakers. It backs talented teams with fresh voices and strong stories. A unique 'apprenticeship' scheme, it provides an intensive approach to filmmaking with the emphasis on original ideas, tightly focused scripts and short production schedules. Filmmakers are supported by an extensive training and mentoring program from development, through production, all the way to the film's release in the UK and internationally.

The Microwave slate offers a diverse range of features in terms of content, style and genre. To date, 100% of completed Microwave features have secured theatrical distribution in the UK, including BAFTA®-nominated *Shifty* and *iLL Manors*, as well as *Borrowed Time*, *Mum and Dad*, *The British Guide to Showing Off*, *Freestyle* and *Strawberry Fields*. Two further features are in pre-production, due to shoot in 2014.

Film London, as the capital's film and media agency, aims to ensure London has a thriving film sector that enriches the city's businesses and its people. The agency works with all the screen industries to sustain, promote and develop London as a major international production and film cultural capital, and it supports the development of the city's new and emerging filmmaking talent. Film London is funded by the Mayor of London, the National Lottery through the BFI, and receives significant support from Arts Council England and Creative Skillset.

ABOUT STINK FILMS

Stink is a leading international producer of audiovisual content in the commercial, digital and music sectors with offices in London, USA, France, Germany, Russia, Brazil and China.

Stink has established a niche for itself by placing a relentless focus on artistic quality at the heart of everything they do. From live action to animation, through digital and experiential projects, Stink constantly look to explore, lead and shape emerging media and artistic trends while maintaining a competitive edge. Stink's roster includes award winning names such as; Nicolas Winding Refn, John Hillcoat, Adam Berg, Yann Demange and Tom Green to name but a few.

Stink Films was created in 2010 by Stink and similar to its sister company the ethic and ethos of the company is very much focused on talent, new and established. Stink Films has an active slate of US and European feature films in various stages of development, their first feature *Lilting* has been selected for Sundance 2014 in World Dramatic Competition.

Lilting is a feature written & directed by Hong Khaou, starring Ben Whishaw and produced by Dominic Buchanan. This project has been a significant step towards Stink Films' desire to produce quality films with new and recognized talent for widespread audiences.

ABOUT SUMS FILM & MEDIA

SUMS Film & Media specializes in narrative digital films for new platforms, traditional theatrical releases, and the integration of the two.

Run by producer Andy Brunskill and exec producer Bob Benton, SUMS development projects include a teen gang war epic based on the non-fiction book *Teenage* by Jon Savage, to be directed by Nima Nourizadeh (*Project X*); *Gully*, a psychedelic LA ghetto drama written by Marcus Guillory, to be directed by Michael Rapaport; and *Phone Book*, a multi-stranded narrative film series for tablets, smart phones/TV's, created by Steven Hall, writer of novel *The Raw Shark Texts* and games *Crysis 3* and *Ryse: Son of Rome*, written by Hall and Mark O'Rowe (*Broken, Boy A*), and financed by the British Film Institute. SUMS feature *Jet Trash*, a backpacker thriller starring Robert Sheehan shot in Goa, India, in early 2014.

ABOUT BOB & CO

Created in 2010, Bob & Co is a vehicle to connect media content to finance, under the expertise of Bob Benton. The company has three parts; an advisory function, its own portfolio of media rights and development investments - which includes children's, entertainment feature film, television, and theatre projects - and a capital-raising division focused on media companies and content.

CAST

Ben Whishaw	Richard
Cheng Pei Pei	Junn
Andrew Leung	Kai
Morven Christie	Margaret
Naomi Christie	Vann
Peter Bowles	Alan

CREW

Writer/Director	Hong Khaou
Producer	Dominic Buchanan
Director of Photography	Ula Pontikos
Editor	Mark Towns
Production Design	Miren Maranon
Music Composer	Stuart Earl
Casting Director	Kharmel Cochrane
Line Producer	Donna Mabey
Costume Designer	Camille Benda
Make Up & Hair Designer	Annette Field
Art Director	Augusta Akerman
1st Assistant Director	Jon Midlane
Sound Recordist	Pete Cowasji
Production Manager	Hazel Falck
Acting Coach	Giles Foreman
2nd Assistant Director	Emlyn Pool
3rd Assistant Director	Jeannette Sutton
Script Supervisor	Zara Carnagie
Focus Puller	Karl Hui
D.I.T.	James Ian Gray
Clapper Loader	Anca Badita
Camera Trainee	Jonathan Tomlin
Grips	Frederico Lopez
	Tom Pittman
Boom Operator	David Turnbull
Location Manager	Lex Donovan
	Ross Monaghan
Location Scouts	Owen Twort
	Lorna Ford
	Andy Ross
Gaffer	Bernie Rostoski
Lighting Technician	John Harris
	Salvador Gomez-Lopez
Best Boy	Paul Starkey

Generator Operator	Mel Hayward
Lighting Trainee	Anna Gritsch
Assistant Editor	Philip Michael
Cutting Room Assistant	Funda Hassan
Costume Supervisor	Laura Venables
Costume Standby	Frances Scott
Prop Buyer	Jerry Bland
Property Master	Nikola Wake
Art Department	Francesca Massariol
	Freddy dos Santos
	Evannia Paine
Set Dresser	Emily Jayne Armitage
Painter	Ben Reynolds
Illustrator	Irene Fuga
Construction Manager	Michael Mulligan
Carpenter	David Rigley Williamson
Construction Company	Setsupermarket Film Construction
Make Up & Hair Artist	Katie Lee
Production Assistant	Pascal Le Comte
Runners	Hayleigh Roberts
	Ryan Delahunty
Executive Sound Editor	Joakim Sundström
Supervising Sound Editor	Anna Bertmark
Sound Re-Recording Mixer	Howard Bargroff
Assistant Sound Re-Recording Mixer	Matt Johns
Music Supervisor	Connie Farr / Thinksync Music
Mandarin Translator	Lillian Chia
Pinyin Translator	Jon Oiartzun
Dance Choreographer	Raymond Chai
Title Designer	Christian Morhring
	Frauke Stegmann
Stills Photographer	Stuart Hendry
Editing Facilities	Mimic Media Ltd
	and Will Grayburn @ The Station.
Foley Studio	Europa Foley AB
Foley Artist	Ulf Olausson
Foley Recordist	Lotta Nilsson
Picture Post Production	LipSync Post
Post Producer	Aileen McIntosh
Head of DI	James Clarke
Senior Online Editor	Connan McStay
Colorist	Scott Goulding
	Lee Clappison
Technical Support	Rick White