

**STRAND
RELEASING**

presents

CICADA

A FILM BY
Matthew Fifer

Starring Matthew Fifer, Sheldon Brown

PRESS NOTES

*OFFICIAL SELECTION
BFI London Film Festival
Outfest
Frameline*

Country of Origin: United States of America
Format: DCP/1.78/Color
Sound: 5.1 Surround
Running Time: 94 minutes
Genre: Drama, Romance
Not Rated
English

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LOGLINE

New York City, 2013. Some things are worth waiting seventeen years for, others should have come out sooner.

SYNOPSIS

After a string of unsuccessful and awkward encounters with women, Ben goes “back on the dick.” *Cicada* follows Ben, a young bisexual man, as he comes out to the world and develops an intense relationship with Sam, a man of color struggling with deep wounds of his own. As the summer progresses and their intimacy grows, Ben’s past crawls to the surface.

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

Cicada was the secret I never wanted to tell. I was tired of seeing the same abuse story told over and over again— trauma for the sake of drama, pain without levity, filmmakers representing experiences they had no actual experience with themselves. The facts are one in three girls and one in five boys will be sexually abused before the age of eighteen, male victims are far less likely to come forward, and abusers are often a part of the family not strangers lurking in the shadows. None of the narratives I’ve seen negotiate that truth.

Three months before production, my friend and co-lead Sheldon Brown was shot in Chicago. We didn’t know if he’d be okay or if we should even continue. He was always an integral part of this story and he had been in my heart from the very first page.

The project fell apart overnight.

Over that time, I kept coming back to the same feeling. My experience felt inconsequential in the wake of his. His wounds were life and death, loved ones dealing with the very real possibility they’d lose their best friend. My pain felt distant and numb. It was now nothing but a bad dream.

It was spring. Sheldon came out of surgery. I didn’t know Sheldon’s pain— I didn’t even know if Sheldon knew his own pain, but at the heart this story was processing the truth. And I knew if he was healthy enough, we could do it together.

Cicada is that wish come true. It is a film of love and loss, great pain but also immense joy, with two actors reliving parts of their own experiences. It is a secret told, a wound exposed, and a promise that even in the dark, it’s never too late to cry out.

BIOGRAPHIES

MATTHEW FIFER | WRITER, DIRECTOR | *Ben*

Matt Fifer is a Brooklyn based filmmaker. He studied under Sherrybaby director, Laurie Collyer, and had an education in theory and philosophy. He’s worked on shorts, commercials, and big budget features like *The Avengers* and *A Late Quartet*. In 2016 and 2017, he made IndieWire’s “Top 10” list for best web series of the year. *Cicada* is his feature directorial debut.

KIERAN MULCARE | CO-DIRECTOR

Kieran Mulcare is a graduate of the UNC School of the Arts. He is best known for playing Ruben in Netflix/Marvel's *Jessica Jones* and the White Rabbit in Fox/DC's *Gotham*. Other credits include *The Blacklist*, *Law and Order: SVU*, *Broad City*, *The Following*, the independent shorts *Olfactory*, and *Jewish Girls Are Easy*. He has a recurring role on Showtime's upcoming Untitled Roger Ailes project and this is his directing debut.

JEREMY TRUONG | PRODUCER

Jeremy is a San Francisco transplant working as an LGBTQ+ film producer in New York. Attracted to films that feel true to life and focus on impactful, resonating moments, he often collaborates with LGBTQ+ and PoC filmmakers to tell stories that make a difference. Jeremy is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Art's and his work has screened all over the country including the Sundance Film Festival, SXSW, and Tribeca.

RAMFIS MYRTHIL | PRODUCER

Ramfis Myrthil is a New York-based filmmaker. He went to the 2018 Sundance Film Festival with *A Boy, A Girl, and A Dream* — which placed among the top 18 films for the entire festival. He has participated as a judge for the 2018 BAFTA Student Film Awards as well as a mentor for the Arts, Entertainment & Media Academy Field Day in Pasadena, CA. He has worked with Teach for America, Schools That Can, and Gold Coast Arts, where he taught students about the different stages of film production.

ERIC SCHLEICHER | DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Eric Schleicher is a Brooklyn-based Director of Photography. His documentary roots helped inform his naturalistic filmmaking style. His film credits include the Vimeo's best of 2019 nominated, *Women are Mean* and the Comedy Central web series *Kate Berlant Teaches*. *Cicada* is his first feature film.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

SHELDON BROWN | SAM

Sheldon D. Brown is a graduate of acting at Emerson College in Boston. This year, he has been cast as the lead in About Face Theater's *This Bitter Earth* and Red Tape Theatre's *The Shipment*. Credits include Feral with MPAACT Theatre Company, *American Revolution* with Theater Unspeakable, and the stage reading of *The Gospel of Lovingkindness* with Victory Gardens. He has numerous credits in Boston, including *The Grand Inquisitor* directed by Peter Brook and a collaborative work with friends, The Shakespearean Jazz Show, which turns Shakespeare into New Orleans Jazz.

SANDRA BAULEO | DEBBIE

Sandra Bauleo is an American actress. A native of New York City, she is a graduate of The American Academy of Dramatic Arts. She is best known for her sketch and character work.

COBIE SMULDERS | SOPHIE

Cobie Smulders is a British Canadian actor in film, television, and theater. She currently plays Dex Parios in the ABC crime drama *Stumptown*. She has starred in *How I Met Your Mother*, *The Avengers*, *Spider-man* as well as Broadway's *Present Laughter*.

MICHAEL POTTS | FRANCIS

Michael Potts is an American film, stage, and television actor and singer. However, his most extensive experience has been on the stage. He is best known for his performances as Brother Mouzone in the HBO series *The Wire* and *True Detective*. He is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

SCOTT ADSIT | DR. DRAGONE

Scott Adsit is an American comedian, actor, and writer. He is known for his role as Pete Hornberger on the NBC sitcom *30 Rock*, which won a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series. He also stars in *Veep*, *Appropriate Behavior*, and *Big Hero 6*.

BOWEN YANG | HUDSON

Bowen Yang is an American actor, comedian, and writer known for the comedy pop-culture podcast, *Las Culturistas* and the first Chinese-American, third openly gay male, and fourth Asian American cast member on SNL.

CAST

Ben	Matthew Fifer
Sam	Sheldon Brown
Debbie	Sandra Bauleo
Amber	Jazmin Grimaldi
Sophie	Cobie Smulders
Dr. Dragone	Scott Adsit
Francis	Michael Potts
Bo	David Burtka
Tracy	Jo Firestone
Theresa	Jason "Freckle" Greene

CREW

Writer/Director	Matthew Fifer
Co-Director	Kieran Mulcare
Producers	Jeremy Truong Ramfis Myrthil
Associate Producers	Adam Peryer
1st Assistant Director	Ramfis Myrthil Brandon Scotland
Production Coordinator	Ramiel Petros
Director of Photography	Eric Schleicher
Production Sound Mixer	Vivian Gisle Travis Scott Jones
Hair and Makeup	Lily Li Mia Varrone
Production Design	Chris Weihart
Art Assistants	Azalea Aznidi
Editors	Kyle Sims Matthew Fifer
Supervising Sound Editor	Gisela Fulla-Silvestre
Sound Editor	Ben Kruse
Re-Recording Mixer	Gisela Fulla-Silvestre
Foley Artist and Editor	Tommy Stang
Score	Gil Talmi
Supervising Post Producer	Ahmed Barbary
Colorist	Tarek Hefney

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