



Panopticon
Collective
&
Underground Media
present

the happiest day of my life

Running time..... 8:53

Genre Black Comedy/Road Movie

Year 2015

Language English

Country of Origin Australia

Official website: www.panopticoncollective.com/thehappiestdayofmylife

Official Facebook: www.facebook.com/thehappiestdayofmylifeofficial

Hashtag: #thehappiestdayofmylife



SYNOPSIS

Moonbeam and Ophelia pick up hitcher Becky Buckner, a young woman with a mysterious past. But they all have something in common, and the most loyal bonds between new friends are those sealed in blood...

Two women strike out across the outback, vengeance on their mind. Haunted by the hit and run killing of their parents in early childhood, Moonbeam and Ophelia set out to seek revenge. First on their list is the original driver, a motivational speaker fresh out of prison...but they don't stop there. Maybe they like the taste of it because, one after another, motivational speakers are disappearing faster than ludes and blotter at a Jefferson Airplane concert.

As the film opens they find Becky Buckner hitchhiking in full bridal regalia. They pick her up but she doesn't say much about where she's been. She thinks she hears a thumping in the boot of the car, but is distracted by the sisters. Stopping at a roadside diner, Moonbeam feeds Becky some of her "special" homemade cookies and deeper down the rabbit hole we go.

Eventually the thumping is revealed to be Moonbeam and Ophelia's latest prey, motivational speaker Thomas Cox. Thomas tries to escape but the three easily catch up to him.

Becky realises why she's been united with the sisters and her own homicidal past is revealed. She recounts the day before in which she burnt down the church and all the wedding guests inside. And with that she seals her fate with the sisters by executing Thomas with a shovel.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



The genesis of *The Happiest Day Of My Life* is a strange one. The film's cast and crew was originally brought together in late 2014 to create a film for the 48 Hour Film Project Melbourne. The 48 Hour Project is an amazing opportunity (and challenge!) for filmmakers to make a film in 48 hours, given a series of "elements" to be included in your film - genre, character, line of dialogue, prop. As part of the 48HFP process, we scored the genre "road movie" and, along with our writer Sasha Kane, as a group we felt ourselves drawn down the path towards the heady, seedy grindhouse/exploitation films of the 1960's

and 1970's.

Our three talented lead actors (Jeni Bezuidenhout, Isabelle Bertoli and Aimee Sanderson) brought just the right amount intensity and zaniness to the characters of Becky Buckner, Ophelia Stabb and Moonbeam Spiritwillow. Working under the pressure of getting a script the morning of the shoot (which, like a restless wild animal, kept shifting as we started shooting), and then shooting literally from dawn to dusk, is a process that is equal parts gruelling, joyous and delirious for everyone involved.

Every live action shot you see in the film, as well as our fantastic score by Stephen Chambers, was completed in 48 hours. However, the film that would eventually become *The Happiest Day Of My Life* did not make it over the finish line for the 48 Hour Film Project. For the next several months Chris Bennett and I kept chipping away at it and the end result is a strange little beast that I'm actually very fond of. It's a lot less serious than a great deal of the work I'm usually drawn to, and that's something I find pretty refreshing. It's stylish, silly and a pretty fun exercise in genre-bending...an odd blend of comedy and retro genre experimentation.

We enjoyed making it tremendously and we hope that you get a kick out of it too. And remember, in the words of the late Thomas Cox, "don't be the cow"!

PRODUCTION COMPANIES



Founder:
Chris Bennett

Underground Media is a Melbourne based media production studio, which makes awesome things for artists, performers, musicians, and all other creative industry professionals.



Founders:
Sebastian Bertoli and Jeni Bezuidenhout

Panopticon Collective is a Melbourne-based film and theatre production company with a focus on creating new Australian work, exploring themes of national identity and social responsibility. Panopticon Collective is committed to working toward paying artists.

MAIN CAST



Aimee Sanderson
as Moonbeam Spiritwillow

Aimee Sanderson, a graduate of the Howard Fine Acting Studio Australia, just finished filming the new Australian independent feature 'The Journey'.

Aimee has completed various short films including the Tropfest shortlisted 'The Thing About Sally...' and co-produced a finalist film in the 48-hour film festival. She was also the lead in the short film 'The Wait' directed by Jet Wilkinson.

Aimee's theatre credits include 'The Three Sisters', playing the youngest sister Irina, Gwendolyn Fairfax in 'The Importance of Being Earnest', Tracy Lord in 'Philadelphia Story', 'Quills', 'Butterflies are Free', 'Midsummer Night's Dream', 'Play it Again Sam' and 'Man Alive' for various theatre companies in Victoria and WA.

In 2014 she also played Jane in Dramatic Pause's Short Play 'It's On Me' which went on to win Best Short Play in the Kyneton One Act Play Festival.

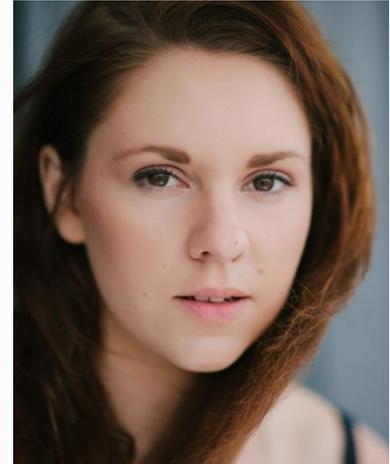


Isabelle Bertoli
as Ophelia Stabb

Isabelle graduated from the University of Ballarat's Arts Academy, with a Bachelor of Arts (Acting) in 2009. She went on to complete a Masters of Teaching, specialising in Teaching Shakespeare, at the University of Melbourne in 2012.

Her theatre credits from last year include: Social in Squid Stamp's 'The Technology Show'; Sarah in 'Something Old, Something New' and Fay Blue in 'Your Guide' for Essendon Theatre Company's play festival 'Something With A Twist'; Lunatic in Mockingbird Theatre Company's 'Quills'; Banquo in Eagle's Nest Theatre's 'Macbeth'. As well as production manager and front of house for Ladymullet Productions' season of 'Love Triangle 1919' for Melbourne Fringe Festival 2014.

She was awarded People's Choice Award Best Performance of a Female Actress by Hannie Rayson for her role as Clare/Susan/Missy in 'Children of the Paparazzi' at The National Playwright Competition 2014. Her recent film credits include: Sally in Lamberg and Bennett Productions entrant 'Candy Cravings' - a finalist for the Forty Eight Hour Film Festival Melbourne 2013; Jane in Sam Hicks' 'Psychotherapy' 2014; Ophelia in Underground Media's 'The Happiest Day Of My Life' 2014; and Pam/Mum in TipRat Theatre & Underground Media's web series 'Something Nautical' 2015.



Jeni Bezuidenhout
as Becky Buckner

Born in Pretoria, South Africa, Jeni moved to Australia at the young age of 15. She grew up moving around the country and finished drama school at the Arts Academy (University of Ballarat) in 2012.

Jeni's recent film credits include: 'Many Happy Returns' (2015), 'Garden In The Sun' (2015), 'Flora' (2015), 'The Happiest Day Of My Life' (2015), 'Painless' (2014) and award-winning short 'Plunge' (2014).

She also appeared in the award-winning horror feature 'Cat Sick Blues' (2015), currently assaulting audiences in festivals worldwide.

She is an Actor/Writer who has created and appeared in new Australian works for the last several years. Most recently she appeared in Theatre 541's 'Tejas Verdes' (2016). Some of her favourite theatre credits include 'Goblins' (2015), which she co-wrote, and the sold-out Adelaide Fringe season of 'Wendy House' (2014).

Jeni is also the co-founder of Panopticon Collective, a film and theatre production company. In 2015 they produced new theatre work 'Goblins' with La Mama Theatre, which Jeni co-wrote with Cassandra Yiannacou and 'Love Sarah' by Kathryn Goldie.

Most recently Jeni finished writing 'Thula Thula' a play exploring three relationships effected by apartheid in South Africa.

www.jenibez.com

CREW



Sebastian Bertoli
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

Sebastian trained as an actor at Arts Academy (University Of Ballarat) graduating in 2006. He spent almost 4 years in Vancouver, Canada, acting on stage and screen, returning to Melbourne in 2012. He is currently undertaking a Master of Film & Television at the Victorian College of the Arts. He is passionate about creating original Australian content.

Sebastian directs and writes for both theatre and film. 'The Happiest Day Of My Life' is the second short film he has directed. He has shot two since, 'Many Happy Returns', currently in post-production, and 'goldfish' which is being packaged for festival submissions. 'Candy Cravings', his first short, has screened internationally in the USA, Canada, Europe and India.

Sebastian's theatre credits include: 'Goblins' (La Mama 2015) and 'Love Sarah' (2015), 'tiny. big. world.' (Until Monstrous Theatre 2014) and 'Intertidal' (Melbourne Fringe 2013). He and actor/writer Jeni Bezuidenhout, started film and theatre production company Panopticon Collective last year. They have since produced two plays and two short films.

www.sebastianbertoli.com



Chris Bennett
DOP/EDITOR
PRODUCER/Thomas Cox

Chris Bennett is a Melbourne based cinematographer, editor, colourist, and director. He began his artistic career studying fine art at the Queensland College of Art, where he graduated with first class honours in 2007. Chris has worked as the cinematographer on a number of short films, including 'Candy Cravings', 'The Happiest Day of My Life', and also wrote, directed and shot another short, 'Icarus'.

www.undergroundmedia.net.au



Sasha Kane
WRITER

Sasha is a writer, director and filmmaker better known for her dark, visceral yet tragically whimsical works. Coming from a background as an embedded conflict photojournalist, she made her debut into film with the dramatic shorts 'Painless' (2014), 'I Promise' (2014) and is currently in post-production for her most ambitious project for the screen to date with 'Flora'.

She currently resides in Melbourne and is a full-time screenwriter and filmmaker.

www.sashakane.com

QUESTION TIME!

The film has a more dated look than you would expect from a contemporary short. Why is that?

Chris: After reading Sasha Kane's script, and receiving the score from our composer Stephen Chambers, the feel of the film emerged quite clearly as an intersection between Machete and Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. A slightly psychedelic road movie with the larger than life characters that you saw in both films. Because of where it lay in our minds we decided that a grindhouse style would best serve the look of the film, and also the overly theatrical performance style.

We followed this through into the post production workflow, most noticeably with the colour grade.

Sebastian: When we briefed our colourist Nicholas Hower, of Post Haus Colour, on the look of the film, we explained that we wanted our digital footage to look like the film stock from the 60's and 70's. And for some of the scenes to look like they had been shot on "damaged" reels, perhaps reels with manufacturing defects or that had been damaged by exposure. Nicholas did a fantastic job. I love the look of the film.



The score is an eclectic mix of rockabilly, psychobilly, with a good measure of hard rock and psychedelic rock thrown in for good measure. Can you speak a bit about your influences musically?

Sebastian: A few hours into the pressure-cooker process that is the 48 Hour Film Project, I probably spoke to Stephen (who was in Sydney) on the phone for less than 10 minutes. I ran him through what story we had at that point, which from memory was still a pretty loose idea about a runaway bride with murder on her mind. Then I threw a bunch of bands at him that I hoped would trigger some flashes of inspiration. From memory I think I mentioned Led Zeppelin, The Stooges and Jefferson Airplane. Stephen got back to us in under 24 hours with the wonderful, mad music that exists in the film.

Chris, you usually work behind the lens as a DOP or director, how did you find jumping in front of the camera to play the ill-fated Thomas Cox?

Chris: That was a real challenge for me. I'm much more comfortable being behind the camera, and having the cameo as Thomas Cox definitely put me outside my comfort zone. I'm glad the part didn't involve any on-camera speaking or I would not have come off so well. It made me respect even more what our actors were able to bring to their roles. They were able to take these very weird characters from the script and make them real for us.



What was it like as an actor to work with such a limited time frame from idea, to development to filming in 48 hours?

Jeni: I think as an actor you are prepared mentally for the challenge before you go into it. The whole process is an adventure and you cannot hold back in any way. Commitment is definitely something you cannot lack, there is no time for doubts and the times I had doubts I ended up investing that to drive the character. When I first read the script, I had no idea what to do. I think like most actors it almost feels like you forget how to act, but then just 'being' takes over and things start to develop. The character started with balling her eyes out in the initial script, which meant I spent 12 hours investing myself in that emotional state. But things change so quickly, and the skills of adapting are very necessary. The lack of sleep over more than 24 hours of filming definitely makes for an emotional journey. I absolutely am in love with film and how you can transform to tell a story, my love for it and what I was doing definitely pushed me to make some risky choices. The support of the team and Sebastian Bertoli's direction really pulled everything together.

CREDITS

DIRECTOR

Sebastian Bertoli

SCREENWRITER

Sasha Kane

PRODUCERS

Chris Bennett
Sebastian Bertoli
Jeni Bezuidenhout

'MOONBEAM SPIRITWILLOW'

Aimee Sanderson

'OPEHLIA STABB'

Isabelle Bertoli

'BECKY BUCKNER'

Jeni Bezuidenhout

'THOMAS COX'

Chris Bennett

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Chris Bennett

1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Jessica Fallow

EDITOR

Chris Bennett

SOUND RECORDIST

Nicholas Hower

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Kelly Dowell

COSTUME DESIGNER

Tenille Petrelli

PROPS

Pete Trimble

MAKEUP

Jessica Kate

MUSIC COMPOSER

Stephen Chambers

COLOURIST

Nicholas Hower

SOUND DESIGNER

Sam Heathcote

