

**LONDON FILM SCHOOL**

**MA SCREENWRITING**

**SCREENWRITERS' SHOWCASE**

**DECEMBER 2012**

**Dennis and Dragon** by Pepijn van Weeren

**Killcoaster** by Fred Forse

**A Dream of Mexico** by Noah Castro

**The Submariner** by Tessa Nicholson

**How to Live Happily Ever After** by Karen Anstee

**Errant** by Chris Andrews

## December 2012

The Masters in Screenwriting at the London Film School is an intensive one year programme with the focus on developing the writer's voice in the context of a world class film school where we make over 170 films each year. Screenwriting students work alongside directors, actors, editors and producers developing their script editing as well as screenwriting skills and gaining a practical understanding of the course philosophy that screenwriting is filmmaking.

As we know it takes time, tenacity and talent to develop a career as a screenwriter. This is the seventh year of the screenwriting programme at LFS and many graduates are now working professionally across the industry in development, production and on their own projects in companies as diverse as Matador, Scottfree, Lionsgate, Power to the Pixel and Focus Features.

In the past year graduate achievements include the first feature from Luke Foster, the UK comedy *Betsy and Leonard* currently doing the festival circuit, Kaveh Mohebbi's feature length horror shot in Canada, Hrafnkell Stevanson's third feature *Citystate* starring Jonathan Pryce and Ines Braga's two-part feature length drama, *Alice* (broadcast Nov 2010) commissioned by HBO Latin America and directed by Sérgio Machado (*Lower City*) and Karim Ainouz (*Madame Satã*).

Stavros Pamballis's second produced feature, the micro budget '*Turbulence*', now has a Worldwide sales deal with Andre Bennett's Cinema Esperança International, based in Toronto. His screenplay *Monolith*, co-written with an MA Filmmaking directing graduate, has been optioned by MetFilm while his first feature as a writer/director, *The First Cypriot Astronaut*, received Media Support and is currently looking for production finance.

Recent graduate Ben Cleary was shortlisted for two scripts into the last 10 out of 196 for a Filmbase/RTE competition in Ireland while winning outright the prestigious BlueCat screenwriting competition. This is the second time an LFS screenwriting graduate has won. After winning an open competition through the BBC's Writer's Room, Karim Flint's screenplay has been optioned by Marza Animation in Japan. Freddy White has just finished post on a short film written on the LFS programme and picked up by Rankin Film Productions. The company has also taken out an option on his first feature.

Today however we are highlighting the work of the 2012 graduating year with a selection of rehearsed readings from their feature projects, directed by Udayan Prasad and introduced by Frank Spotnitz, with story worlds ranging from the utopian hope of a late 1960's Mexico to the dystopian future of London, from the west coast of Ireland in the 1940's to the back streets of Cairo during the Arab Spring. There's a romantic comedy with a murderous talking cat, a fantasy drama, a political thriller and the world's first euthanasia rollercoaster, romantic adventure, sci-fi, social and magical realism, all shaped around classic themes of love and betrayal, sexual and social politics, coming of age and self-discovery.

We hope you will join with us in celebrating the hard work, intelligence and talent of the graduating class of 2012 while remembering that these scenes are selected from works in progress – as we all are.

**Brian Dunnigan**  
Head of Screenwriting  
MA Course Leader  
London Film School

**LFS MA SCREENWRITING FACULTY:**

Head of Screenwriting: Brian Dunnigan

Course Tutors: Margaret Glover, Roger Hyams, Ellis Freeman, Philip Palmer

Jonathan Hourigan, Nadine Marsh – Edwards, Merle Nygate, Amanda Schiff, Ed Windus.

**LFS MA SCREENWRITING MENTORS:**

Dictynna Hood  
Alexandra Stone  
Bill Shapter  
Gub Neal  
Lila Rawlings  
Karen Lee Street  
Neil Arksey  
Petra Cooper  
Helen Jacey  
Archie Tait  
Merle Nygate  
Hugh Stoddart  
Brian Ward  
Mark Solomon  
Alex Perrin

**SHOWCASE DIRECTED BY:**

Udayan Prasad

**PERFORMED BY:**

Niamh McGrady  
Jonny Leigh Wright  
Aria Prasad  
Graham O'Mara  
Polly Frame  
Joe Gaminara  
Hugh Skinner

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

Frank Spotnitz

**SHOWCASE CREW:**

Christopher Thomas  
Debashis Delai

**SHOWCASE PRODUCTION:**

John Sibley & Chi Yu

**VISITING LECTURERS:**

Dean Craig  
Helen Jacey  
Richard Kwietniowski  
Robyn Slovo  
Olivia Hetreed  
Gub Neal  
Mette Bolstad  
Mark Solomon  
Alexandra Stone  
Michael Johnson  
Brian Ward  
Udayan Prasad  
Alex Perrin  
Matt Greenhalgh  
Sandy Lieberman  
Lila Rawlings  
Richard Raskin  
Archie Tait  
Jonathan Phillips  
Frank Spotnitz  
Shiona Llewellyn  
Camilla Bray  
Ines Braga  
Stephen Volk  
Rob Kraitt  
Lauren Dark  
Jean Sprackland  
Laurence Coriat

**PEPIJN VAN WEEREN**

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### ***Dennis and Dragon***

*A rites of passage story: Dennis, a shy Dutch boy whose mother suffers from schizophrenia, meets a dragon that helps him tackle his problems at school and home.*

Dennis (10) loves listening to the fairy tales his mother, Maureen, tells him but when she is taken away to a mental hospital with schizophrenia the boundaries between fantasy and reality become blurred.

Misunderstood by his over-worked father and bullied at school he finds solace in the forest. Here he meets a dragon, and they become best friends. Dragon teaches him to stand up to the bullies but he also has a darker more destructive side that could be dangerous for Dennis.

When his father works late and Dennis has to spend the night with Anna, his neighbour and worst enemy from school, he paradoxically discovers true friendship and the truth about Dragon that could save his mother.

**FRED FORSE**  
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### ***Killcoaster***

*A naive theme park owner with good intentions invents the world's first euthanasia rollercoaster but discovers that his success in providing an exciting end to other people's lives – comes at a terrible cost to his own.*

The year is 2051. Overpopulation has caused a huge decline in living standards; people are miserable and suicidal. One of the last places that distract people from their misery is Emerica Theme Park, run by fun-loving George and his good-hearted but number-crunching son Richard.

When George reveals he has a brain tumour and dies ecstatically on a self-designed rollercoaster of death called “the End”, Richard decides to open the ride to all those who are terminally ill.

But his good intentions are undermined by the financial success of the ride that also brings him into conflict with another more ruthless euthanasia entrepreneur. Losing sight of the ride's altruistic beginnings, Richard becomes determined to kill as many people as possible, terminally ill or otherwise...

**NOAH CASTRO**  
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***A Dream of Mexico***

*Mexico: 1968. A dysfunctional family, torn by generations of scandal, reinvents itself by helping a student activist escape a political massacre.*

Vincente, a student activist from a peasant background is caught up in the brutal army repression of a massive student demonstration. This is where he meets Rebecca an apparently upper-class, mixed-race daughter of a recently deceased army general, who uses her knowledge of military tactics to help them both escape the carnage.

They are sheltered by Esperanza, her proud, aristocratic mother who lives in a surprisingly low-rent apartment and is dismissive of Vincent but proudly defiant of the brutal army officer who tries to capture him.

The peasant past and industrialised present of Mexico, class conflict and the struggle for justice in the face of military repression - all stand revealed in the ensuing conflict - where Vincente and Rebecca are drawn to each other as they discover the shocking truth about their family histories.

**TESSA NICHOLSON**  
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***The Submariner***

*1941 on the west coast of Ireland, the body of a German submariner is washed ashore and the lives of the children who rescue him are changed irrevocably.*

Connor is an imaginative young boy of 11 who lives on an island off Donegal with his mother, Kathleen, and his impressionable sister, Mannie. His father, a fisherman, went missing six months ago during a storm out at sea – presumed dead, though his body has never been recovered. Connor's mother is struggling to make ends meet. She refuses to accept any help from the other islanders because that would be like admitting that her husband is dead. To help her, Connor has taken to bunking off school to put food on the table, searching the sea shore for fish. At night he loves to read stories of kelpies and fairies to his younger sister.

But one day he enters a shocking story of his own. Finding the body of a half-alive German submariner on the beach he has to decide whether to leave the stranger to die & claim the blood money that would help Connor's family or to hide and take care of the German who reminds him strangely of his father - and put all their lives at risk.

**KAREN ANSTEE**  
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### ***How to Live Happily Ever After***

*A romantic comedy: an evil genius cat goes to murderous lengths, in order to help his lonely owner find true love with a pet bereavement counsellor.*

Brian – a witty and erudite cat - is fed up with his lovely owner Lucy crying on his fur about men, without ever being able to hear his good advice, not to mention her habit of rescuing ignorant, bad-mannered stray cats. Really! Why can't she be like other girls and just bring home a new pair of shoes? Meanwhile, in the house behind Lucy's, lives bird-loving Gabriel Fallon – pet bereavement counsellor at the ritzy Beaumont Animal Hospital and author of a self-help book, "How to Live Happily Ever After".

Brian sees Gabriel as the solution to Lucy's man problem and his serial-killing of Gabriel's birds successfully brings Gabriel together with Lucy in the animal hospital where unfortunately she falls for the wrong man – Gabriel's handsome, womanising friend and vet – Davis.

All of Brian's feline cunning is required in order to bring Gabriel and Lucy back together and to recognize that paradoxically they are the ones who can help each other live happily ever after.

*Karen would like to thank Mark Khalife for filming the introduction to the performance of her scene.*



**CHRIS ANDREWS**  
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***Errant***

*A rites of passage story set the barren post-industrial landscape of northern England involving two young boys and their intense but ultimately tragic friendship.*

Ten year old David has moved with his parents Tessa and Tony and his younger sister Louise to Barrow-in-Furness. He is unaware that the family's move to this new town is to escape the repercussions of an industrial accident for which his father is being held responsible.

Living in a Catholic family, his mother has David primed to be an altar boy, but David's immediate concern is exploring this new world. David finds a friend in Ian, a wild child of his own age, and their relationship burns brightly. But with Ian comes complications and as his father's past catches up with him, David's relationship with Ian spirals out of control and the line between friendship and sexuality becomes tragically blurred.

**MAJA BITON**  
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***The Messenger (Hebrew: Unetane Tokef)***

*Tel Aviv. An Israeli army Casualty Messenger becomes so consumed with his duty, as a way of dealing with his past, that he risks losing his family – and himself.*

Gershon Barnea, a 50 year-old High School Headmaster and Reserve Army Casualty Officer has a part-time job as an army messenger assigned to inform parents of the death or serious injury of their children who are serving in the army.

The years of delivering bad news are taking their toll and Gershon has also long promised Ruth, his wife of 25 years, he'll quit his job as a messenger once their eldest son, Jonathan, is drafted to the army. But a year since Jonathan's service commenced, Gershon, feeling it's his duty and his only way to control his life, finds it impossible to quit and Ruth, feeling Gershon is tempting fate, is nearing a breaking point on the issue.

But when they themselves receive a message that their son is seriously injured both Gershon and Ruth are forced to confront their feelings for each other and the way they are living which involves the discovery of a new and life-changing perspective on Gershon's work as a messenger.

**KEFI CHADWICK**  
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### **10 Mourners**

*Layabout waster Luke is forced to find 10 mourners for his estranged father's funeral and in doing so save both his father and himself.*

When wealthy, un-loved business man Tight suddenly dies, he makes a deal with the Devil; if his estranged son Luke, 30, can raise 10 mourners for Tight's funeral, Tight will secure a first class seat in Hell but Luke will have to take his place in Hell. Together, father and son go in search of mourners. But as they start to build a relationship, Tight's deal with the devil is exposed. Conflict ensues, until understanding, reconciliation, love and eternal peace finally prevail.

**SAMI EL-HADI**  
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### ***The Extraction***

*In a near-future dystopian London a surveillance expert falls in love with one of his targets and turns his unique abilities against his employers.*

Liam is a young and naive surveillance expert working for a ruthless private police force with strong links to corrupt political and corporate power. His current assignment is to follow onscreen one of his employer's fiercest critics and target for elimination, the clever and vivacious journalist Clara Langham.

Liam's growing and obsessive love with Clara, turns to rage as he witnesses her callous murder and uses all his skills to plan a terrible revenge.

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**CAM LEVIN**  
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### ***On The Wire***

*Egypt: The Arab Spring. A washed up American journalist re-evaluates his life when he meets an activist student and is drawn into a terrifying conspiracy involving wrongdoing and murder at the heart of the Egyptian and US regimes.*

Laconic hard-bitten American journalist, Robert Salter, well into his late forties and arguably past his sell-by date, plunges into a political and personal heart of darkness during the Arab Spring in Egypt, re-evaluating his life as he meets an angry online student activist whose own father is a pivotal part of the corrupt government in power.

In his tenacious pursuit of justice, Salter first has to deal with his own flawed journalistic history and the possibility of a love that threatens but could also redeem his aggressively individualistic past.

**MALIKA JMEL**  
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***The Orientalists***

Lubna, a young French Moroccan woman, feels she must flee her family in Paris in order to take control of her life. She begins a precarious existence in London where she becomes involved with an English artist obsessed with her "exoticism" but ironically, through this relationship gradually transforms herself from artistic subject to Artist.

**SAM MORRISSEY**  
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### ***Golem***

*A fantasy drama set in the gothic citadel of Chermal where clay has a magical power to take on human shape and shape human desire. A young priest expelled from the temple uses this power to fight the corrupt religious sect that controls the city – and to save his love - but at a terrible cost to himself.*

In the city of Ir Chermal, clay is power – but the only ones with access to it are the Agrilladon, a religious sect of wizard-politicians who lead the city from their fortress temple in the mountains overlooking the city. The clay has a multitude of uses – from boxes that only the owner can open and clay roses that mask unpleasant aromas, to magical clay rings that can blow heads off.

David left his childhood friends, Lilith and Amit, to train in the temple to become an Agrilladon, but he is expelled and cast back onto the streets of Ir Chermal, friendless and powerless. It is not the city he remembers – a new drug, Serenity has taken the streets, turning the population into mindless junkies.

David runs into his old friends - Lilith is a singer, and Amit is a gangster, involved in the distribution of the new drug, Serenity. With the knowledge David must have acquired at the temple, Amit wants David to work for him, but David is much more interested in his once-best-friend's girlfriend, his childhood love, Lilith. Recruited as a double agent to spy on Amit for the Agrilladon, David eventually discovers a power that can help him, but will he be able to control it?



**SOFIA RIMSKAYA**  
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### ***The Room***

*Leningrad, Soviet Union: early 1960's. Rita is a young mother blackmailed into spying on her bohemian neighbours and forced to make a tragic choice between her love and her ideals.*

1960s, Leningrad, USSR. Rita, a wife and mother, is coerced by KGB officer Talov into spying on a group of dissidents and in particular on her neighbour Violetta, a literary critic.

Struggling with the moral issues of spying and betrayal Rita has to choose whether to protect her family or her new friends. And in the process she also has to confront her own dark past and the web of secrets and lies that threaten them all.



**ROBERT WALLIS**  
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***Love and Guilt and Hired Guns***

*Two long estranged middle-aged friends meet up for a week-end in Blackpool but their apparently mild mannered exteriors conceal dark secrets that erupt into mayhem and murder by the sea, that ironically reignite their friendship.*

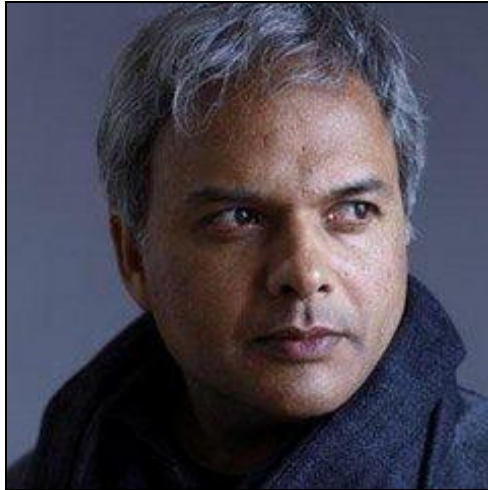
Neil and Pete have not spoken in many years and have gone on to live very different lives. Neil has just been abandoned by his childhood sweetheart and wife of twenty years, leaving him alone and depressed. Pete is still trying to achieve his teenage dream of becoming a rock star. Both find themselves faced with far graver problems when a long-standing debt of Pete's comes due.

Neil finds himself with a body in the bathtub and believes it to be that of his wife's secret lover. Pete, now on the run from the Mob, enlists his old friend in an impromptu trip to Blackpool, hoping to wring from Neil the money that might save his life. Neil agrees to go in the hope of disposing the body he now finds himself burdened with. Neither knows the other's reasons.

At the end of Blackpool pier Neil and Pete are finally forced to confront their past illusions and choose between the burden of responsibility and the emptiness of freedom.

## SHOWCASE DIRECTOR:

**Udayan Prasad**



Born in India, UDAYAN PRASAD came to Britain at the age of nine. He has been directing documentaries, television drama and feature films since graduating from the National Film & Television School in Beaconsfield. Among his numerous television credits are three single dramas with Simon Gray - *They Never Slept* 1989, *Running Late* 1992, *Femme Fatale* 1992 and two with Alan Bennett - *102 Boulevard Haussmann* 1991, *Talking Heads 2: Playing Sandwiches* 1998.

His first theatrical feature was *Brothers In Trouble*, 1995 (Golden Alexander Award for best first feature at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival), This was followed by *My Son The Fanatic*, 1997 (Directors Fortnight Cannes Film Festival, 1997, Best Feature at the Potsdam Film Festival), *Gabriel & Me*, 2000 (Edinburgh Film Festival), *Opal*, 2005 Toronto International Film Festival) and *The Yellow Handkerchief*, 2008 (Sundance Film Festival).

When not actively involved in production, he is a frequent visiting lecturer on directing and screenwriting programmes at several film schools including The National Film & Television School in Beaconsfield, UK; The London Film School; The Wajda School in Warsaw and the National Film, Television and Theatre School in Łódź, Poland. He is also an advisor and mentor on various international directing and screenwriting workshops.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

**Frank Spotnitz**



Frank Spotnitz is an award-winning writer and producer best known for his work on *The X-Files*. His latest series, *Hunted*, aired on BBC1 and Cinemax in autumn 2012.

His other credits include *Strike Back* (2011), *Samurai Girl* (2008), *Night Stalker* (2005), Michael Mann's *Robbery Homicide Division* (2002), *The Lone Gunmen* (2001), *Harsh Realm* (2000) and *Millennium* (1997-1999).

*Hunted*, produced by Kudos Film and Television in association with Spotnitz's own Big Light Productions, is an international spy thriller starring Melissa George. He created, wrote and executive-produced the eight-part series.

Spotnitz served as executive producer, directed two episodes and wrote or co-wrote more than 40 episodes of *The X-Files* television series. He was a producer and co-writer of both *X-Files* feature films, "Fight the Future" (1998) and "I Want to Believe" (2008).

He shared three Golden Globes for Best Dramatic Series and a Peabody Award for his work on *The X-Files*. He was also nominated for an Emmy Award for writing and three times for Outstanding Drama Series.

Spotnitz began his professional life as a journalist, writing for United Press International, Associated Press and Entertainment Weekly, among others, as well as reporting for the seminal French pop-culture TV series, *Rapido*.

Born in Japan, he received a B.A. in English literature from UCLA and an M.F.A. in screenwriting from the American Film Institute.

### **THE SHOWCASE CAST:**

#### **Polly Frame**

Jeanette Hunter at Shepherd Management  
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Polly Frame studied at Bristol University. Her stage appearances include London's West end, The National, The Young Vic, The Bush, Chichester Festival Theatre and she has toured internationally (including appearing on Broadway, NY). Polly has also worked extensively for the BBC, Channel 4 and ITV, has appeared in 2 Feature films, countless shorts and can be heard regularly on BBC Radio 4.

#### **Joe Gaminara**

Chris Keen at United Agents  
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Joe has just graduated from LAMDA. Before that he trained with the National Youth Theatre, and did a degree in Philosophy at Bristol University. Over the last five years his credits have included: Michael in 'Festen', Harry in 'Posh', Ewan in 'Racing Demon', Liam in 'Orphans', Jack in 'A Small Family Business', Oberon in 'Midsummer Night's Dream', Lucius in Julius Caesar, and Andrey in 'Three Sisters.'

**Aria Prasad**  
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After graduating from the University of Hull Drama Department in 2008, Aria made her theatre debut playing Jasvinder in Tamasha's production of SWEET CIDER (dir. Kristine Landon-Smith) at the Arcola Theatre. This was followed by Alya in NO SUCH COLD THING (dir. Rachel Grunwald), part of the Tricycle Theatre's The Great Game: Afghanistan. Her television debut was as Yasmin in SPOOKS Series 8, ep 7 (dir. Ed Hall). She then played Aisha in THE CURFEW (dir. Darren Garrett), an interactive drama for Channel 4, Sarala in BROKEN ETERNITY (dir. Devika Ponnambalam), a short for Film Four/BFI and her latest role as Salina in HONEYCOMB LODGE (dir. Lesley Manning), a feature film. She has also taken part in rehearsed readings at the Adelaide and Unicorn Theatres directed by Rachel Grunwald and Christine Bacon.

**Graham O'Mara**  
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Recent theatre credits: HINDLE WAKES, Finborough Theatre. GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR, Young Vic. ALICE, Sheffield Crucible. PEDAL PUSHER & THE WINTER'S TALE, Theatre Delicatessen. FOOD, Traverse/B.A.C. Recent TV: GOOD COP, BBC DOCTORS, BBC FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER, Big Talk Productions SIRENS, Daybreak Productions Recent short film: "I Want To Be Happy Cha Cha Cha" directed by Jonathan Schey, written by Luke Barnes. "Real Life Hero" written & directed by Rocky Palladino, Light Brigade Films.

**Hugh Skinner**  
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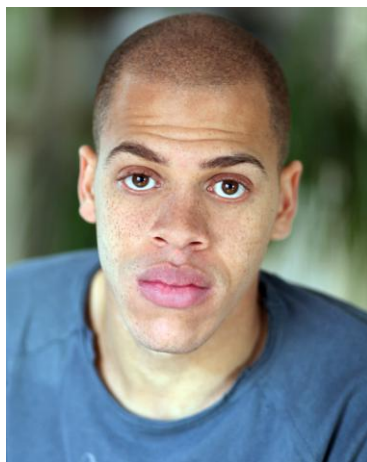
Hugh Skinner trained at LAMDA. Television and film credits include: Les Miserables, Any Human Heart, Law & Order, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Bonkers, A Bloody Muddle, Day of the Dead and Glove. Theatre includes: The Enchantment (National Theatre), Senora Carrar's Rifles (Young Vic), French Without Tears (English Touring Theatre) The Great Game (Tricycle Theatre), Angry Young Man (Trafalgar Studios), 2nd May 1997, Sixty Six Books, Sudden Loss Of Dignity, Where's My seat? (Bush Theatre), Tis Pity She's A Whore (Everyman), You Can't Take it With You (Royal Exchange), Wild Oats (Bristol Old Vic) Is Everyone Ok?, Phil & Marie, It's About Time (Nabokov), Savage/Love (Theatre 503).

**Niamh McGrady**  
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Niamh McGrady trained at RWCMD graduating in 2004. Since then she has performed with Patrick Stewart in Macbeth, in London's West End, BAM and Broadway. Recent work includes 'Upstairs Downstairs' (BBC1). Series regular Mary Claire Carter in 'Holby City' (BBC1) and working alongside Gillian Anderson in upcoming series 'The Fall' for BBC2.

**Jonny Leigh Wright**  
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Jonny got an MA in Acting from ArtsEd. Drama School. He has appeared in numerous films and is in Mike Leigh's latest film A Running Jump. He also had a part in London Boulevard with Colin Farrell and is due to start filming for Rikki Beadle Blair's new feature, Taken In, next year.

Jonny is just coming off the back of two plays, Confetti at the Last Refuge and Teatime at The Lantern Theatre in Liverpool, and he also was in Guantanamo Boy at Stratford Circus this year. He played the lead in Babul and the Blue Bear at the Contact Theatre and had two roles in De Botto Business by Benjamin Zephaniah at the Hackney Empire.

Jonny is also a rap artist and goes by the name of XYM aka Da Yorkshire Rapper. He has released four albums and his music can be found on iTunes and at [www.xymyorkrapper.bandcamp.com](http://www.xymyorkrapper.bandcamp.com). Follow him on Twitter @xymyorkrapper

Jonny is also an award winning writer and has developed two sitcoms with the BBC. This year he won the Brian Glover Award for his short film Solider Boy and is going to play the lead himself. Filming is going to be with Pampaset Productions next March.

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**A huge thank you to our Screenwriting Graduates, Course Tutors, Visiting Lecturers and Mentors, Udayan Prasad, Frank Spotnitz, the Showcase Cast and to all the staff at the London Film School.**