



FILMMOVEMENT

Wilby Wonderful

A film by Daniel MacIvor



Running Time: 99 min.

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SYNOPSIS

Wilby Wonderful is a bittersweet comedy about the difference a day makes. Over the course of twenty-four hours, the residents of the tiny island town of Wilby try to maintain business as a sex scandal threatens to rock the town to its core.

The town's video store owner, Dan Jarvis (James Allodi) – depressed over the pending revelations about his love life – decides to end it all, but keeps getting interrupted by Duck MacDonald (Callum Keith Rennie), the town's dyslexic sign-painter, during his half-hearted suicide attempts. Meanwhile, Dan has enlisted blindly ambitious real estate agent Carol French (Sandra Oh) to sell his house in an effort to quickly tie up the last of his loose ends. Carol, however, is more interested in selling her recently deceased mother-in-law's house to Mayor Brent Fisher (Maury Chaykin), in order to get in with the in-crowd.

To take her social step up, Carol could use the help of her police officer husband Buddy (Paul Gross), but Buddy has his hands full with sexy, wrong-side-of-the-tracks Sandra Anderson (Rebecca Jenkins), who can never decide if she is coming or going. Sandra's daughter Emily (Ellen Page), is none too thrilled about her mother repeating her typical pattern of married men and bad reputation, but Emily herself is just about to have her heart broken for the very first time. Of course everyone's concerns are going to be very different tonight when someone finds the body in the closet. Welcome to Wilby.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

MacIvor always planned to shoot the film in his home province of Nova Scotia, but he hadn't expected to end up on the South Shore. "I was always imagining we'd be working in the North end of the province, closer to Cape Breton, but we heard about Shelburne and the Film Centre facility and went up for a scout. We loved it immediately. The studio was great and Shelburne was a perfect Wilby. After our preliminary scout, I began a re-write to accommodate the great locations I found in Shelburne."

A refurbished naval base, the Shelburne Film Centre (nicknamed "Camp Wilby") became residence, production office, dining hall, recreation centre, and home to the cast and crew. MacIvor thought it was a great facility, and the added bonus of having the entire cast and crew spend time together off screen was invaluable to the development of the team mentality that imbued the shoot. "So often during filming everyone just heads off at the end of the day and the shoot can become just another gig. But what we had going on was more of an experience—a community was formed—and we were all part of it, from drivers to hair and make-up, from actors to producers. It was a great time—Camp Wilby will be long remembered."

Wilby Wonderful features a stellar ensemble of Canada's most talented performers.

MacIvor wrote the part of Dan Jarvis for James Allodi. The two have worked together for many years in the theatre and Allodi played the lead in MacIvor's short film, *Permission*. "Dan Jarvis is a troubled man who feels he has nowhere to turn and no one to confide in. I wrote the part for Jim knowing he could handle the silence Dan carries with him—Jim has

an amazing ability to command attention by simply being silent and still. He has a phenomenal presence, and as well a sense of melancholy that Dan needed. He brings such life to Dan.”

The multi-talented Allodi has been following the script through its many stages of development. “One of the things that really appealed to me was the fact the story takes place during one day. Every time you do a scene, you are obligated to find the emotional continuity of that scene, something that appears to take place one minute later on screen may have actually been shot two weeks earlier. It makes you do your homework. And it’s that preparation that gets you under the skin of the character; it makes you look for the details, the small moments that define the emotional journey. And that’s what *Wilby* is, really: a series of these beautiful, intimate moments.”

When writing the part of Mayor Brent Fisher, MacIvor always had Maury Chaykin in mind. “Brent Fisher is not a bad guy, but he knows how to play the game”, explains MacIvor. “He is just one of the boys in the good-old-boys network; he sees little harm in what he does. Inside the story he is certainly a villain, but I didn’t want it played that way. I knew Maury would give it a twist.”

Paul Gross plays police officer Buddy French. “When Paul’s name came up for Buddy I was very excited about the sense of heroism he could bring to the character,” says MacIvor. “Paul does that so well. But I also needed him to be a failing hero. On the first day I said to Paul, ‘I need you to go to an insecure place and play Buddy from there.’ Which he did, beautifully. Paul’s work in this movie is lovely. Very gentle, open and vulnerable. He is a tremendous actor.”

A multi-tasker himself, he had a clear idea of what MacIvor was trying to capture. Says Gross, “When I read the script, I thought it was really beautiful, very carefully observed, a very detailed slice of a particular kind of community. It is a very subtle, believable and effective piece of writing, where the sum of the ensemble is larger than the individual parts. I have admired Daniel’s work over the years, but I’ve never actually worked with him before. It has been a terrific experience.”

Rebecca Jenkins plays Sandra Anderson, who has just moved back to Wilby after many years away. When MacIvor offered Jenkins the part, she was very excited about the opportunity to play someone who was always trying to look for the positive. MacIvor explains, “Rebecca’s played a lot of dark and brooding characters in the past, but if I had to pick one word to define Rebecca as a person it would be ‘sunshine.’” Jenkins is a talented musician (a beautiful song she wrote and sings appears in the film), and an award-winning actor who has worked with MacIvor on both of his last two projects, *Marion Bridge*, which he wrote, and *Past Perfect*, which he wrote, directed and co-starred in with Jenkins. “Daniel and I have developed a kind of a short hand...it’s actually getting to the point where we can look at one another and without a word get both the question and the answer.”

Sandra Oh, well known for her comedic talents and award-winning dramatic performances, brings a rich mixture of edge and pathos to Carol French. “Because of Carol’s tunnel vision ambition and almost desperate need to be accepted, she could have very easily been played broadly and one-note, but Sandra has such a sensitivity to Carol. She understands her

struggle of needing to be accepted by the community, and her misguided choices to reach that goal,” says MacIvor. “From day one Sandra nailed it brilliantly and brought so much humanity to the role, more than I saw myself actually.” Born and raised in Ottawa, Sandra Oh was thrilled to come home to Canada when offered the part by MacIvor. “I thought the script was great, but mostly I wanted to do this film to work with Daniel.”

After meeting Ellen Page on *Marion Bridge* and witnessing her formidable talent, MacIvor began re-writing the role of the intelligent, wise-for-her-years Emily Anderson specifically for Page. “I think Ellen is amazing,” says MacIvor. “She is emotionally connected in ways that I could only ever dream of being. Emily is in the midst of a difficult sexual awakening, and that is not easy to play at sixteen. But Ellen does it with grace and truth. After her first experience with MacIvor, Page was excited to have the opportunity to work with him again. “Daniel is such a wonderful writer and director, but really I think it comes down to the fact that we trust one another,” she says.

For the role of Duck MacDonald, MacIvor turned to friend and fellow actor Callum Keith Rennie. “Callum is similar to Duck in a lot of ways,” says MacIvor. “I think of them both as angels, but in the old sense of an angel, the kind with armour and wings.” Rennie, a Genie Award-winning actor, admired the way the storylines came together with such humour and heart. “I hadn’t played this kind of character before. There is a kindness and gentleness to him. He doesn’t have a lot of conflict, but he has deep concerns and hopes,” says Rennie. “I have known Daniel for fifteen years, and I am really happy to have this opportunity to work with him. He is very adept at getting what he wants. He has a way of getting his ideas across with gentleness.”

For Daniel MacIvor, *Wilby Wonderful* is a gentle and intimate story of hope and the importance of believing that we live in a world of creation, not destruction. In fact, we create that world by believing in it. “In a more complex way of looking at it, the movie is about reflection and inversion,” says MacIvor. “If we allow ourselves to exist as the reflection of others’ perceptions of us, that reflection is inverted, reversed—it can lead us to missteps and bad choices. But in the world I aspire to live in, even bad choices can lead us to understanding. Sometimes everything ends up backwards, but as this film says, sometimes the backwards way is better.”

MacIvor is a director who loves to write. “One of the things I take from my work in the theatre is a fluidity around story and script. No element is too small to be considered essential, and no element too important not to be potentially eliminated. We have to be able to evolve with the story as it evolves.” But that doesn’t mean a throw-the-script-away-and-improvise attitude on set. “We very much stick to the script on the day – although chances are it has changed considerably from the day before.” MacIvor explains, “I continue to write through the shoot. As long as the actors will take changes, I’ll give them changes. We try to keep the script alive and breathing through the shoot, always continuing to uncover the story beneath it.”

One challenge MacIvor set for himself was to make the story take place in a twenty-four hour period. “I am interested in time – what time means. This comes from my work in the theatre—a time-based medium. Time always figures prominently for me. 24 hours is

interesting because to make it seem plausible, the revelations and changes must be gentle, small—deciding to stay, or try, or not try at all.”

Another challenge MacIvor happily met was the demanding work of creating an engaging multi-storyline film. “I set that up as a challenge for myself. But really the multi-storyline battle was won with the casting of the ensemble. God couldn’t have cast this movie better.”

CAST

Dan Jarvis	James Allodi
Mayor Brent Fisher	Maury Chaykin
Buddy French	Paul Gross
Sandra Anderson	Rebecca Jenkins
Carol French	Sandra Oh
Emily Anderson	Ellen Page
Duck MacDonald	Callum Keith Rennie
Stan Lastman	Daniel MacIvor

CREW

Director/Screenwriter	Daniel MacIvor
Producers	Camelia Frieberg
Co-producers	Sherrie Johnson
	Geneviève Appleton
Director of Photography	Rudolf Blahacek
Editing	Mike Munn
Production Designer	Emanuel Jannasch
Costume Designer	Lin Chapman

ABOUT THE CAST

JAMES ALLODI (Dan Jarvis)

Allodi most recently starred in *Rhinoceros Eyes*, *Foolproof*, *Men With Brooms*, *Glitter*, *Dead Aviators*, *The Five Senses*, as well as Daniel MacIvor’s short film *Permission*. Allodi starred as himself in Peter Lynch’s *The Herd*, which was nominated for a Genie Award for Best Feature Length Documentary. The multi-talented Allodi made his own feature film directorial debut in 2000 with *The Uncles*, based on an original screenplay he wrote.

Allodi was seen in a recurring role in the television series *Once A Thief*, and has appeared in numerous other series such as *The Associates*, *Due South*, and *The Newsroom*. He also appeared in CityTV’s live theatre production of Bruce McDonald’s *American Whiskey Bar*, as well as such television movies as *Angel of Harlem*, *Fellini and Me*, and *Thrill Seekers*.

In theatre, Allodi’s portrayal of Val in the production of *The Last Supper* earned him a Dora Award nomination for Best Actor. Allodi has worked under the direction of Daniel MacIvor

in theatre productions of *You Are Here*, *In On It*, and *The Soldier Dreams*. His other theatre credits include *How an Intellectual Can Aspire to Savagery*, *He Made the Stars Also*, *The Watchspring* and *Choastic*.

Allodi has his Bachelor of Fine Arts majoring in Film from New York University. He lives in Toronto and is currently in development on his second feature film as writer-director.

MAURY CHAYKIN (Brent Fisher)

Chaykin is legendary in film, television and theatre. Born in Brooklyn, Chaykin established himself on both sides of the border as one of the preeminent character actors of our time. His impressive list of film credits include *Being Julia*, *Owning Mahowny*, *The Art of War*, *What's Cooking*, *Mystery Alaska*, *Entrapment*, *My Cousin Vinnie*, *Jerry and Tom*, *The Postman*, *A Life Less Ordinary*, *Love and Death on Long Island*, *Devil In A Blue Dress* and *Unstrung Heroes*. Chaykin also appeared in *Hero* with Dustin Hoffman, turned in a scene-stealing role as the suicidal army officer in Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves*, and worked with esteemed director Atom Egoyan in *The Sweet Hereafter* and *The Adjuster*. Chaykin's performances have garnered numerous awards, including a Genie for Best Actor in a Leading Role for *Whale Music*, and a Gemini for Best Actor in a Guest Lead on *Nikita*. The ensemble cast of *The Sweet Hereafter* won the prestigious New York Film Critics Association Award.

Chaykin's television credits include his memorable award-winning portrayal of the legendary Hal Banks in *Canada's Sweetheart: The Saga of Hal C. Banks*, as well as *Due South*, *The Tracy Ullman Show*, and the title character in the A&E series *Nero Wolfe* opposite Timothy Hutton. Chaykin's theatre credits include *A Man's Man*, *Leave it to Beaver is Dead*, *Gimme Shelter*, and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

PAUL GROSS (Buddy French)

Gross is internationally known for his role as Constable Benton Fraser on the multi award-winning drama television series *Due South*, a role that earned him two Gemini Awards for Best Actor in 1995 and 1996. Gross made his feature film directorial debut in 2002 and starred in *Men With Brooms* from an original screenplay he co-wrote with John Krizanc. In feature films, Gross has starred in *Paint Cans*, *Married To It*, *Whale Music*, *Aspen Extreme*, *Cold Comfort* and *Buried on Sunday*.

While starring in the television series *Due South*, Gross not only executive produced the final season, but he also wrote many of the episodes, which garnered him the Gemini Award for Best Writing in a Dramatic Series. Previously, Gross has penned two television movies—*Gross Misconduct*, and *In The Corner* directed by Atom Egoyan. Gross also starred in and executive produced the television movie *Murder Most Likely*. His other acting credits include the popular Canadian television movie *Getting Married in Buffalo Jump*, and in such mini-series as *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*, *Tales Of The City* and *Chasing Rainbows*.

Gross played the title role in the Stratford Festival's 2000 production of *Hamlet* to record-breaking audience numbers. He also received a Dora Award nomination for his performance as Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* and a Best Performance Dora Award for his role in the Canadian Stage presentation of *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Toward the Somme*.

Gross was born in Calgary, earned a degree in drama at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and currently lives in Toronto.

SANDRA OH (Carol French)

Oh is one of Canada's best-known comedic and dramatic actors, with motion picture, television and theatre credits to her name. In addition to *Wilby Wonderful*, her film credits include *Sideways*, *Under the Tuscan Sun*, *Bean*, *Guinevere*, *The Red Violin*, *Waking the Dead*, *The Princess Diaries*, *Pay or Play* and *Dancing at the Blue Iguana*. Sandra won her first Genie in 1994 for her leading role in Mina Shum's *Double Happiness*. Her performance in Don McKellar's *Last Night* led to her winning a second Genie Award for Best Actress in 1999.

In 1993, Sandra landed the coveted title role in CBC's *The Diary of Evelyn Lau*. Her performance brought her a Gemini nomination for Best Actress and the 1994 Cannes FIPA d'Or for Best Actress. She then went on to star as Rita Wu on the HBO comedy series *Arli\$\$* for the first six seasons. Her additional television credits include *Six Feet Under*, *Further Tales of the City*, and a recurring role on *Judging Amy*.

Never straying far from her theatre roots, Sandra Oh has starred in the world premieres of Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* at the La Jolla Playhouse and Diana Son's *Stop Kiss* at Joseph Papp's Public Theatre in New York, a role for which she received a Theatre World award. She was also recently seen in the *Vagina Monologues* in New York.

Born and raised in Ottawa, Canada, Sandra Oh attended the prestigious National Theatre School of Canada for three years. She moved to Los Angeles in 1996, where she currently resides with her husband, director Alexander Payne.

ELLEN PAGE (Emily Anderson)

Page started her career in 1997 at the age of 10, starring as a lead in both the MOW and television series *Pit Pony*, which won her a Young Artist Award nomination for Best Performance as well as a Gemini nomination for Best Performance in a Children's or Youth Program or Series. She then went on to perform in the television series *Trailer Park Boys*, which earned a Gemini nomination for Best Ensemble Cast. In 2002, Page starred in her third series, *Rideau Hall*. Further to her series credits, she is also credited with lead roles in television movies such as *Homeless to Harvard: The Liz Murray Story*, *Mrs. Ashboro's Cat* and *Going for Broke*.

Page made her feature film debut in 2002 starring in *ghost.com*, then went on to add Wiebka von Carolsfeld's *Marion Bridge*, written by Daniel MacIvor, *Love That Boy*, *Wet Season*, and *Mouth to Mouth* to her film credits.

Page is one of Canada's best rising stars. When she isn't acting, she attends high school in Toronto.

CALLUM KEITH RENNIE (Duck MacDonald)

Rennie was born in England and raised in Alberta, Canada. Rennie started acting at the age of twenty-five, and has since added an impressive list of feature film and television credits to his name.

Rennie's feature film credits include *Falling Angels*, *Flower and Garnet*, *Picture Clare*, *Memento*, *The Last Stop*, *Hard Core Logo* and *Double Happiness*. In 1998, Rennie won a Best Supporting Actor Genie for his role in Don McKellar's *Last Night*, and went on to appear in David Cronenberg's *eXistenZ*.

Rennie starred as a lead in the television series *Due South* playing opposite Paul Gross for two seasons. His other television credits include *Twitch City*, *Trapped*, *Bliss*, *Dice*, *For Those Who Hunt the Wounded Down* and *Paris or Somewhere*.

DANIEL MACIVOR (Stan)

MacIvor is one of Canada's most talented theatrical and feature film actors as well as an accomplished writer and director. MacIvor adds **Wilby Wonderful** to his already impressive list of film, television and theatrical performances.

We recently enjoyed MacIvor in the feature films *Past Perfect*, for which he won the Best Actor Award at the Atlantic Film Festival in 2002. His other feature acting credits include Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses* and *Eclipse*, *House*, and *I Love A Man in Uniform*. He wrote, directed and starred in the short films *Until I Hear From You*, and *Wake Up, Jerk Off*. Television audiences have enjoyed MacIvor in the series *Twitch City* and the TV movie *Gross Misconduct*.

MacIvor has been impressing Canadian and international audiences with his on-stage performances for years, in such theatrical productions as *Cul-de-Sac*, *In On It*, *You Are Here*, *Monster*, *The Soldier Dreams*, *Here Lies Henry*, *Excerpts From the Emo Journals*, *White Biting Dog*, *Never Swim Alone* and *House*, among many others.

ABOUT THE CREW

DANIEL MacIVOR (Writer/Director)

Wilby Wonderful is Daniel MacIvor's second feature film as director and writer following 2002's *Past Perfect*, in which he also starred. First known for his work in theatre, MacIvor is Artistic Director of *da da kamera*, a theatre company he runs with his longtime business partner Sherrie Johnson. Together they formed the company's offshoot *da da kamera pictures*. As a theatre maker, MacIvor is known to audiences around the world for the touring productions of his own plays: *Cul-de-sac*, *In On It*, *Monster*, *Here Lies Henry*, and *House*. He and *da da kamera* have been the recipients of numerous awards, including a GLADD Award from the American Gay and Lesbian Anti-Defamation League, and the prestigious Village Voice OBIE in 2002.

MacIvor has been working as a filmmaker since 1995 when he wrote and directed the now cult favorite shorts *Wake Up Jerk Off* and *Margaret Atwood and the Problem With Canada*. In 1997, he wrote and directed the half hour *Permission*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. And in 1998, he wrote and directed the festival favorite, *Until I Hear From You*.

As a screenwriter, MacIvor's credits include Laurie Lynd's Genie Award-winning 22 minute musical *The Fairy Who Didn't Want To Be A Fairy Anymore* (in which MacIvor also starred as the titular Fairy), co-writing (and starring in) the feature film *House* (based on his own play) which Lynd also directed, and writing *Marion Bridge* for Wiebke Von Carolsfeld, which won best First Canadian Feature at the Toronto International Film Festival, and won MacIvor Best Screenplay at the Atlantic Film Festival in 2002. Also known as an actor, MacIvor was nominated for a Genie Award for his work in Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses*, and was a regular on Don McKellar's CBC series *Twitch City*.

Currently MacIvor continues to tour his one man performance *Cul-de-sac* and is at work on an screenplay adaptation of his play *You Were Here*.

CAMELIA FRIEBERG (Producer)

WILBY WONDERFUL marks the second time Frieberg has teamed up with writer/director Daniel MacIvor following the 2002 success of *Past Perfect*.

Frieberg is one of Canada's busiest and most accomplished independent producers, best known for producing Atom Egoyan's acclaimed *The Sweet Hereafter* which was nominated for two Oscars for Best Director and Best Adapted Screenplay, and won 8 Genie Awards including Best Motion Picture, and the Grand Prix, the International Critics Prize, and the Ecumenical Award at the Cannes Film Festival.

She produced the award-winning features *Exotica*, *The Adjuster* and *Speaking Parts*. Frieberg is also credited with producing Jeremy Podeswa's *Eclipse* and *The Five Senses*, Srinivas Krishna's *Masala*, and was executive producer for Amnon Buchbinder's *The Fishing Trip*, the highly acclaimed musical comedy, *Bollywood Hollywood*, directed by Deepa Mehta, as well as Lea Pool's *Mariposa Azul*.

Frieberg has been recognized and awarded for her accomplishments as winner of the Toronto WIFT Crystal Award for Excellence in Production and Vancouver's WIFT 'Woman of the Year'. She also serves on the board of Astral Media's Harold Greenberg Fund. Frieberg now resides in rural Nova Scotia with her husband and two children.

SHERRIE JOHNSON (Co-producer)

Wilby Wonderful is Sherrie Johnson's second feature film collaboration with writer/director Daniel MacIvor and producer Camelia Frieberg. Johnson was an associate producer on *Past Perfect* in 2002.

Johnson is well known in Canadian and international cultural circles as a successful agent, award-winning theatre producer and co-founder of the Six Stages Festival which has taken place in cities such as Berlin, Glasgow, Prague and Toronto. Her longstanding partnership with Daniel MacIvor started in 1993 when they formed da da kamera, helping to turn it into a vital and successful international company, touring extensively through Canada, the United States, the UK, Europe, Israel and Australia.

As a film producer, Johnson has worked with some of the brightest lights on the Canadian scene, including Jeremy Podeswa, for whom she produced the shorts *The Susan Smith Tapes* and *Touch*; and Wiebke Von Carolsfeld, producing her short film *Spiral Bound*. Her work with MacIvor includes his short *Until I Hear From You* and his upcoming *You Were Here*. Currently she is working as producer for Srivinas Krishna, known for his widely popular *Masala*, on his new film *A Tryst With Destiny*, to be shot in India next year, and on his upcoming Air India mini-series for broadcaster Toronto One.

GENEVIÈVE APPLETON (Associate Producer)

Geneviève Appleton has worked in the film and television industry since 1983 as an actor, producer, director, editor, writer, and story editor. Her production credits include Gemini-Award-winning *The Arrow*, and the feature film *Such a Long Journey* directed by Sturla Gunnarsson. Appleton co-wrote the bible and pilot of a dramatic television series, *Minds' Eye*, for AXYZ Animation and series creator John Coldrick, and she has just completed writing a feature film set in 2052 entitled *The Last Dreamplay*.

For her own company, White Wave Productions, Appleton has written, produced, directed and edited numerous films and videos, including the documentary *A Garden's Family* for Vision TV, and a half-hour drama, *Vision*, adapted from a short story by Ursula K. LeGuin, which won a TV Ontario Telefest Award. Her documentary entitled *Actor's Transformation*, on the work of acting teacher Deena Levy and her students, recently premiered at the Female Eye Film Festival and will be broadcast on Bravo! in the coming year.

Appleton is currently co-producing the feature *Come Back Paddy Riley* by writer-director Amnon Buchbinder (*The Fishing Trip*), with Camelia Frieberg and Kelly Bray.

RUDOLF BLAHACEK (Director of Photography)

Wilby Wonderful marks the second collaboration between cinematographer Rudolf Blahacek and director Daniel MacIvor, after working together on *Past Perfect*. With a career spanning over two decades, Blahacek is one of Canada's busiest DPs, with feature film credits including Igor Virovac's *The Lodger*, Sky Gilbert's *My Summer Vacation*, Edmond Chan's *Garage* and Peter Lynch's *The Herd*. Blahacek's television credits include A&E and Alliance

Atlantis' *The Heist*, CBS's *The Pilot's Wife*, Disney's *Tru Confessions*, USA Network's *Devil's Pass* and **Do Or Die**, Showtime's *Crown Heights* and Rhombus Media's mini series *Slings and Arrows*.

MIKE MUNN (Editor)

Editor Mike Munn has established himself as a fixture on the Toronto new wave scene of the 1990s, editing films for Bruce McDonald's *Road Kill*, Pete Mettler's *Picture of Light* and *Tectonic Plates*, and John Greyson's *The Law of Enclosures*. Most recently, Munn has been credited with his work on the critically-acclaimed *Onning Mahoney* for Richard Kwietniowski, as well as his collaborative efforts with director Srinivas Krishna on *Masala* and *Lulu*. Munn is also the director/producer on the award-winning short film, *A Hole In The Road*.

EMANUEL JANNASCH (Production Designer)

Wilby Wonderful is the second occasion Emanuel Jannasch has teamed up with Daniel MacIvor as production designer, following his work on *Past Perfect*. A native Nova Scotian, Emanuel Jannasch studied architecture at Cornell and Dalhousie, and works in many aspects of building and design as well as in film. His first production credit was *Def-Con4*. Jannasch worked both as art director and production designer. Favourite projects include Dan Petrie's *Calm at Sunset*, Richard Kwietniowski's *Love and Death on Long Island*, and Mort Ransen's *Margart's Museum*. His design for Trisha Fish's *New Waterford Girl* was honoured with a Genie nomination. In theatre he has designed George Elliot Clarke's *Whylah Falls* for its Halifax runs and also for the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. He is an active teacher in architecture as well as film design.

LIN CHAPMAN (Costume Designer)

Prior to *Wilby Wonderful*, costume designer Lin Chapman's feature film credits include Steven Reynolds *The Divine Ryans*, Virgo Clement's *One Heart Broken into Song*, Peter O'Fallon's *A Rumour of Angels* and Nicholas Kendall's *Cadillac Girls*. Chapman is well known for her television work and is credited with working on such television series as *Made In Canada* as well as the CBC's *Blizzard Island*, *Codco*, *Theodore Tugboat*, and *Street Cents*. Chapman's television movie credits include *Pit Pony*, *God Knows*, *Anne and Maddy*, *The Peggy*, *In Service*, *A Town Without Christmas* and *Footsteps*.

FESTIVAL AWARDS & HISTORY

Official Selection/in Competition:

Toronto International Film Festival 2004
Vancouver International Film Festival 2004
San Sebastian Film Festival 2004

Opening Night Gala—Atlantic Film Festival 2004

Cinéfest Sudbury 2004

Filmfest Hamburg 2004
Calgary International Film Festival 2004
The Vancouver International Film Festival 2004

ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT

Film Movement is an innovative new film distribution company, created as a solution for millions of consumers across the nation whose access to outstanding film is limited by geography, lifestyle or lack of information. Film Movement has members in over 50 states and 1200 cities. Film Movement acquires award winning independent films from the world's top festivals, which they then release each month of the year to members on DVD through a subscription service, and theatrically through The Film Movement Series. Participating filmmakers are able to reach under-served film fans everywhere through Film Movement.

The Film Movement Series is a new theatrical film series featuring some of the best in original world cinema. Created by the team that invented the groundbreaking Shooting Gallery Film Series, Film Movement will release 6 of its 12 films per year in leading independent cinemas in major US cities to help outstanding filmmakers find the audience they deserve. All films are available to members exclusively on DVD upon theatrical release so that they may participate regardless of where they live.

Film Movement has partnered with some of the leading independent theaters in the country to exhibit the Film Movement Series. The schedule includes the following films:

- Wiebke von Carolsfeld's *Marion Bridge*
- Eric Eason's *Manito*
- Scott Hamilton Kennedy's *OT: our town*
- Donovan Leitch & Rebecca Chaiklin's *The Party's Over*
- Tjebbo Penning's *Morlang*
- Mina Shum's *Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity*
- Vicente Amorim's *The Middle of the World*
- Jacques Doillon's *Raja*
- Tony McNamara's *The Rage in Placid Lake*
- Rolf de Heer's *Alexandra's Project*

WILBY WONDERFUL REVIEWS

Atmosphere, optimism work wonders in 'Wilby'

By Wesley Morris

Boston Globe

Published: 03/18/2005

For fans of the well-made eccentric Canadian ensemble comedy, today is a good day at the Brattle Theatre, where Daniel MacIvor's "Wilby Wonderful" begins a weekend run. For those unacquainted with the genre, this movie, set in the course of a day in small-town Nova Scotia, is a worthy introduction, landing somewhere between Don McKellar's underrated Y2K romance "Last Night" and the over-preciousness of Jeremy Podeswa's "The Five Senses."

MacIvor, who wrote, directed, and acts in "Wilby," introduces us to about a dozen characters, each of whom is caught in momentary distress about life on the eponymous little island.

Since his wife left him, Dan Jarvis (James Allodi) has been feeling suicidal. His attempts are consistently, amusingly interrupted by fellow islanders, like Duck (Callum Keith Rennie), the friendly local handyman, and Carol (Sandra Oh), the uptight real estate agent who's trying to sell Dan's house. Sssh: The mayor (Maury Chaykin) might be a buyer.

Carol's husband, Buddy (Paul Gross), a Wilby cop, is having an affair with Sandra (Rebecca Jenkins). She left town years ago and is back with her teenage daughter Emily (Ellen Page), who in the jaunty opening sequence runs across town for a make-out session with a boy.

Wilby is one of those traditional-seeming towns that is actually more socially progressive than it appears. You get the sense from the punks and the gays and the lone woman of color that anyone could live here if only they knew it existed. The place is also so dull that the mayor might have to manufacture a little scandal over at the local park so he can benefit for his own selfish reasons.

But not even municipal corruption seems all that terrible in Wilby. Nothing extraordinary happens here. But nothing especially ordinary does either. MacIvor, who plays Stan, Buddy's dim partner, is quite good at not crowding the characters with all kinds of plot. The film is more behavior-driven than anything else, and most of the cast has worked with each other before, so the film has a chummy atmosphere.

Admirers of Mina Shum's 1994 romantic comedy "Double Happiness" might be pleased to see the reunion of Rennie and Oh (the "pour girl" from "Sideways"). And anyone desperate to see what happened to Gross since CBS's Mountie-in-Chicago show, "Due South," went off the air need look no further.

Despite its hipster-coffeehouse soundtrack, foul mouth, randy characters, and violent patches, "Wilby" is wholesome and ultimately remarkable for its optimism. The film's title stems from a mishap with a banner, but it's also a prediction that sums up the local state of mind: We'll Be Wonderful. This may not seem like anything special, but you can see where the movie might have taken a dark detour and chose instead to accentuate the positive. There's room for everyone in Wilby except cynics.

Wonderful idea for a short story

Friday October 8, 2004

By LIZ BRAUN – *JAM! Movies*

Welcome to the small island community of Wilby, where all hell is about to break loose. Wilby is populated by a veritable who's who of Canadian actors, so while this story is sometimes uneven, it's always fun to watch.

Wilby Wonderful is a short story on the big screen, a single day's activity involving disparate but connected characters. Much can change in one day, especially in a small town where everyone knows everyone else.

In Wilby, a sadsack guy (James Allodi) quietly wanders around trying to commit suicide. His bridge-jumping is thwarted, his gas-inhaling is interrupted and a motel maid gets in the way of a hanging. Frustrating.

Meanwhile, an uptight local real estate agent (Sandra Oh) hopes to sell the mayor (Maury Chaykin) a house, her cop husband (Paul Gross) flirts with another woman, that other woman (Rebecca Jenkins) is fighting with her teenage daughter (Ellen Page), and the local handyman (Callum Keith Rennie) quietly observes people around town and helps out where he can.

It seems a scandal of sorts has taken place in Wilby, and the local newspaper intends to print the names of everyone involved. Some locals are frightened, some are shocked, some are happy to live and let live.

Wilby Wonderful is pleasant enough storytelling with a handful of truly brilliant scenes -- most involving Jenkins, Page, Oh or Rennie. The drama aspects of the movie work better than the comedy, however. Sometimes Wilby Wonderful seems like an awkward marriage between a feature film and a TV sitcom.

At any rate, writer/director Daniel MacIvor (who also appears in Wilby as an idiot cop) captures something uniquely Canadian in this film. That's generally a good thing.

Reel Film Reviews

TIFF 2004 UPDATE

Wilby Wonderful

Directed by Daniel Maclvor

CANADA/99 MINUTES/CONTEMPORARY WORLD CINEMA

Wilby Wonderful follows in the footsteps of films like *Short Cuts* and *Magnolia* - particularly the latter - as it features a wide cast of lonely, miserable people.

Writer/director Daniel Maclvor does a wonderful job of establishing this small town - called, coincidentally enough, Wilby - to the extent that we feel like we know the place by the time the movie's over. The cast is

uniformly superb, but Paul Gross especially deserves kudos for playing way against type as a scruffy and nondescript cop who's just trying to do the right thing. And as expected with a movie of this ilk, there are certain characters that are far more intriguing than others (ie Sandra Oh's Carol never quite becomes much more than a twitchy annoyance, despite Oh's surprisingly effective performance). Maclvor proves to be a much more effective screenwriter than director, though his low-key style quickly proves to be an ideal match for the material. In the end, *Wilby Wonderful* is an engaging - though not entirely memorable - look at small town life.



*** out of ****

Best bets for this year's Frameline festival

[Kathleen Wilkinson, special to SF Gate](#)

Wednesday, June 15, 2005

June 22: "Wilby Wonderful"

The "Gilmore Girls" meets a happy version of the "Shipping News" in playwright Daniel Maclvor's island world of **Wilby**. (Frameline fans will remember Maclvor's work from festival favorites "Beefcake" and "Take-Out"; he's been invited to attend the screening.) The film opens with the foiling of mild-mannered Dan Jarvis's suicide attempt by unlikely handyman Duck MacDonald (Callum Keith Rennie). Throughout the movie, Jarvis (James Allodi), makes repeated attempts, but it seems residents in his small Nova Scotian community have an uncanny knack for getting into each others' business even at the most personal moments. In fact, the grapevine is busy all over town with the news of the illicit (read: gay) sex happening at the one remaining undeveloped area on the tiny island, the Watch, and the impending naming of names in the local rag is apparently the cause for Jarvis' despair. Police chief Buddy (the lovable Paul Gross, who played Brian Hawkins in "Tales of the City") works to unravel who has committed exactly what crime, while his wife, Carol (the deliciously funny Sandra Oh of "Sideways" and "Under the Tuscan Sun"), kicks up a whirlwind trying to sell real estate and get in good with the mayor. She threatens to lose it when, through a misconstrued communication -- reminiscent of the childhood game of Telephone -- Duck posts a sign readings "**Wilby** Wonderful" instead of "Wonderful **Wilby**." At times, the story's a bit too pat, and the music gets in the way. Still, for a lighthearted good time with a story in which tolerance and justice rule the day, check out this amusing, offbeat romantic comedy.

Castro Theatre, 429 Castro St., SF; 8:15 pm.