



PRESENTE / PRESENTEERT

THE SINGING CLUB

un film de / een film van Peter Cattaneo
avec / met Kristin Scott Thomas, Sharon Horgan, Jason Flemyng

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2019
FILM FEST GENT 2020



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SYNOPSIS

FR

Tandis que leurs maris sont au front, les épouses de soldats se réunissent dans une base militaire pour former une chorale, se divertir, rire et éviter de penser au pire.

NL

Geïnspireerd door het wereldwijde fenomeen van militaire vrouwenkoren, volgt *THE SINGING CLUB* een groep vrouwen die afgezonderd op een militaire basis leven terwijl hun mannen op missie in Afghanistan zijn. Om hun angst voor hun geliefden te overwinnen, vormen ze een koor waardoor onverwachte vriendschapsbanden ontstaan en de muziek hun dagelijkse leven grondig zal veranderen.

EN

Inspired by global phenomenon of military wives choirs, the story celebrates a band of misfit women who form a choir on a military base. As unexpected bonds of friendship flourish, music and laughter transform their lives, helping each other to overcome their fears for loved ones in combat.

NOTE DU REALISATEUR PETER CATTANEO

Quand on m'a proposé, il y a trois ans, de réaliser une fiction inspirée par les chorales des femmes de militaires, j'ai tout de suite été enthousiasmé à l'idée de faire un film consacré à la musique et au chant.

À mesure que je rencontrais de vraies femmes de militaires, des thèmes passionnants se sont imposés: un groupe hétéroclite découvre la cohésion et la camaraderie par le biais du chant ; des femmes à qui l'on demande toujours de tenir bon et de se taire trouvent enfin leur voix. Nous avons découvert des femmes de soldats très courageuses et sincères, et les histoires qu'elles nous ont confiées étaient des leçons d'humilité, parfois émouvantes et souvent hilarantes. J'ai été frappé par leur honnêteté, leur pragmatisme et leur sens de l'humour. J'étais déterminé à imprégner le film de toutes ces qualités.

Nous avons tourné à la garnison de Catterick, là où a été fondée la première chorale de femmes de militaires. La base nous a fourni des uniformes et des véhicules spécifiques, des décors authentiques et de précieux conseils. De véritables soldats en exercice ainsi que leurs familles ont joué les figurants, et la maison de Kate dans le film est en fait l'endroit où s'est tenue la toute première répétition de la chorale en 2010.

Ce qui m'a le plus attiré dans ce projet, c'est sans doute l'idée de faire un film qui célèbre le pouvoir émotionnel de la musique et l'effet cathartique dans l'acte de chanter ensemble. Les chants ont tous été enregistrés dans les conditions du direct, dans les décors du film, en conservant les imperfections d'une chorale amateur, pour obtenir un son authentique. Les actrices ont répété la chanson finale avant le tournage, mais nous avons choisi de ne pas leur faire répéter les morceaux «connus», pour garder ce côté brut et spontané.

Nous avons passé en revue des centaines de chansons afin d'obtenir la meilleure des sélections pour notre chorale. Je voulais des titres dont les thèmes faisaient écho à l'histoire, sans être trop téléphonés. C'était fascinant de découvrir quelles chansons et quels genres s'adaptent le mieux aux arrangements choraux. Nous nous sommes aventurés dans le rock et la musique pop contemporaine, mais nous sommes toujours revenus aux tubes électro-pop des années 1980: c'est la musique que nos héroïnes écoutaient dans leur jeunesse, et ces chansons créent un décalage amusant avec l'austérité de la vie militaire.

La relation entre Kate et Lisa constitue le cœur émotionnel du film, et travailler avec Kristin Scott-Thomas et Sharon Hogan a été un immense plaisir. Ce sont des actrices tellement talentueuses, aussi à l'aise dans le drame que dans la comédie, avec des allures, des origines et des énergies aussi différentes que complémentaires. Elles ont fait preuve d'une grande créativité, elles se sont plongées dans les émotions de chaque scène et, dans un esprit d'émulation, elles ont réussi à mettre beaucoup d'humour dans leurs échanges.

Quant à la distribution dans son ensemble, il était important de composer un groupe bien défini de personnages hauts en couleur. Lorsque les actrices se sont rencontrées pour la première fois lors d'une répétition de la chorale, l'un des thèmes

du film a pris vie sous nos yeux, car ces femmes qui ne s'étaient jamais vues se sont immédiatement rapprochées grâce au chant. C'est le groupe le plus soudé avec lequel j'ai eu l'occasion de travailler : elles passaient leur temps à bavarder et à plaisanter entre les prises, et elles sont toujours en contact aujourd'hui, des mois après le tournage.

J'espère que les spectateurs sortiront de la salle de cinéma en ayant ri et pleuré avec les personnages, en se sentant inspirés par le courage de ces femmes, et séduits par leurs reprises de tubes intemporels.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I first got involved with the Military Wives choir film three years ago and was immediately excited by a concept that would allow me to explore a way of life that has rarely been seen on the big screen, as well as make a film with music and singing at its core.

As I started meeting real military wives, rich themes soon showed themselves: a fragmented group of people finding unity and camaraderie through song; women who are expected to “keep quiet and carry on” finding their voices. We got to know some very courageous and candid military wives and the personal stories they shared were humbling, sometimes harrowing, often hilarious. I was struck by their honest, down to earth sense of humour and I was determined to fill the film with this kind of comedy.

We shot at RMB Catterick, which was where the first military wives choir was formed. The base supplied specific uniforms, vehicles, locations and advice. We used serving soldiers and their families as extras and the location for Kate's house was the actual setting for the first ever military wives choir meeting in 2010.

Perhaps the greatest draw for me was to make a film that celebrates the emotional power of music and the catharsis of singing together. All the singing was recorded live on set with the imperfections of an amateur choir to achieve an authentic sound. The cast practiced the 3 final song before shooting, but we chose not to rehearse the early singing performances to ensure a rough-edged spontaneity.

We went through hundreds of songs in the effort to choose the best tracks for the choir. I wanted songs that thematically resonate with the story without being too on the nose. It was fascinating to discover which songs and genres translated best to a choral arrangement; we explored rock and more contemporary pop music but kept coming back to 80s electro pop classics - this is the music of our character's youth and makes a humorous juxtaposition with the austerity of military life.

Kate and Lisa's relationship is the emotional spine of the film and working with Kristin and Sharon was a joy. They are both such talented actors, equally comfortable in comedy and drama with contrasting looks, backgrounds and energy which complement each other perfectly. They were so inventive on set, digging into the emotion of the scenes and sparking off each other to find the funny in their interchanges.

It was important for the wider ensemble to be a clearly delineated group of memorable characters. When they met for the first time at a singing rehearsal, one of the themes of the film came to life as a group of actresses who'd never met before, immediately bonded through song. This is the most closely-knit ensemble I have ever worked with - always chatting and joking between takes and they are still in touch which each other months after the shoot.

I hope audiences will come away from watching THE SINGING CLUB having laughed and cried with the characters, feeling inspired by the courage of the women and uplifted by hearing them belt out some classic songs.

MILITARY WIVES CHOIRS

Families of service personnel move around frequently and it can often be tough to put down roots or make new friends which can leave women feeling isolated, particularly when loved ones are away for long periods of time.

Research shows that singing in a choir helps to alleviate stress and contributes to an improvement in isolation, anxiety and depression. The Military Wives Choirs network therefore has a vital role to play by bringing women in the military community together through singing.

There are over 2,300 women with a military connection in 75 choirs across the UK and overseas. Every new posting for women in the military community is as daunting as it is exciting but knowing that you have a choir to go to in your new location where you know the songs and even some of the people can be a real lifeline. That's why, whilst each local choir has its own identity, all are run in a very similar way with shared music, a fun and friendly ethos and lots of 'cross-network' projects and activities.

BIO-FILMO

PETER CATTANEO (Réalisateur/Regisseur)

Né en 1964 à Twickenham, Peter Cattaneo étudie le cinéma à Leeds puis au Royal College of Art de Londres. En 1990, son court métrage *DEAR ROSIE* est nommé aux Oscars. En 1995, son film BBC *LOVED UP* est présenté au Festival de Sundance. En 1997, il réalise son premier long métrage, *THE FULL MONTY*, qui obtient un immense succès en Angleterre et à travers le monde, glanant notamment 4 nominations aux Oscars. Depuis, il a réalisé plusieurs séries pour la BBC et les longs métrages *LUCKY BREAK*, *LE SECRET DE KELLY-ANN* et *THE ROCKER*. *THE SINGING CLUB* est son cinquième long métrage.

Peter was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Director for the hit comedy *THE FULL MONTY* and nominated for Best Short Film for *DEAR ROSIE*. More recent work includes all three series of multi BAFTA winning comedy *REV.* starring Tom Hollander and Olivia Colman for the BBC. Peter recently directed the critical hit, *THE A WORD*, written by Pete Bowker, for the BBC, and is also a successful commercials director.

2019 – *THE SINGING CLUB (MILITARY WIVES)*

2016 – *THE A WORD (TV series)*

2010-2014 – *REV. (TV series)*

2008 – *THE ROCKER*

2006 – *OPAL DREAM*

2001 – *LUCKY BREAK*

1997 – *THE FULL MONTY*

1990 – *DEAR ROSIE (short)*

CAST

KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS

Dame Kristin Scott Thomas is a bilingual actress equally at home playing French and English-language roles. She received Academy Award and Golden Globe Award nominations for her starring role opposite Ralph Fiennes in Anthony Minghella's Best Picture Academy Award-winning *THE ENGLISH PATIENT*.

Her breakout role was in another Best Picture Oscar-nominated classic comedy, *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL*, written by Richard Curtis and directed by Mike Newell, which brought her BAFTA and Evening Standard British Film Awards. Among her screen credits are Sam Taylor-Johnson's *NOWHERE BOY*, for which she was a BAFTA and BIFA (British Independent Film Award) nominee; Sydney Pollack's *RANDOM HEARTS*; *THE HORSE WHISPERER*, starring opposite director Robert Redford; Brian De Palma's *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE*; Irwin Winkler's *LIFE AS A HOUSE*, opposite Kevin Kline; Philip and Belinda Haas' *ANGELS AND INSECTS*, for which Kristin won the Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Actress.

She received her fourth Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Actress for her performance in Catherine Corsini's *PARTIR [LEAVING]*, which also brought her a César Award (France's Oscars equivalent) nomination for Best Actress. She was previously a César nominee for Philippe Claudel's *IL Y A LONGTEMPS QUE JE T'AIME [I'VE LOVED YOU SO LONG]*, for which she was again a Golden Globe and BAFTA Award nominee.

Among Kristin's recent films are *THE INVISIBLE WOMAN*, starring with director Ralph Fiennes; Nicolas Winding Refn's *ONLY GOD FORGIVES*; François Ozon's *IN THE HOUSE*; and Israel Horowitz's *MY OLD LADY*, with Kevin Kline and Dame Maggie Smith. Scott Thomas was also seen in Joe Wright's Academy Award nominated film *DARKEST HOUR*, where she starred alongside Lily James and Gary Oldman, receiving a BAFTA Award nomination for her performance.

1994: *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL*

1995: *ANGELS AND INSECTS*

1996: *THE ENGLISH PATIENT*

1998: *THE HORSE WHISPERER*

1999: *RANDOM HEARTS*

2001: *LIFE AS A HOUSE*

2008 : *IL Y A LONGTEMPS QUE JE T'AIME*

2009 : *PARTIR*

2009: *NOWHERE BOY*

2013: *THE INVISIBLE WOMAN*

2013: *ONLY GOD FORGIVES*

2014: *MY OLD LADY*

2014: *SUITE FRANCAISE*

2017: *DARKEST HOUR*

SHARON HORGAN

Sharon Horgan is a BAFTA winning Irish actress, writer, producer and director who is perhaps best known for her multiple award-winning sitcom *CATASTROPHE* which she co-writes and stars in with Rob Delaney, airing on Amazon Prime and Channel 4. Sharon's further acting credits include amongst other *BOJACK HORSEMAN* (Netflix), *ADVENTURE TIME* (CARTOON NETWORK), *PSYCHOBITCHES* (Sky Arts), *THE BORROWERS*, (BBC), and *BAD SUGAR* (C4), as well as the films *RUN AND JUMP*, *DEATH OF A SUPERHERO*, and *MAN UP*. She was nominated for two BAFTA Awards and won two British Comedy Awards for her BBC show *PULLING* which she co-wrote and starred in.

As a director, Sharon won critical acclaim with her debut short-film *THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS*, which also went on to win the Outstanding Achievement Award at the International 3D Awards.

Earlier this year, Sharon starred alongside Rachel McAdams, Jason Bateman and Kyle Chandler in the critical and commercial hit feature film *GAME NIGHT*. Sharon is starring in *WOMEN ON THE VERGE*, she co-wrote the first episode with Lorna Martin.

JASON FLEMYNG

Jason's first major film role came in 1998 where he starred as the lead in Guy Ritchie's London gangster feature *LOCK, STOCK and TWO SMOKING BARRELS*. Flemyng starred in The Hughes Brothers' *FROM HELL* alongside Johnny Depp and in Stephen Norrington's *THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN* he appeared alongside Sean Connery. Later film credits include *MIRRORS*, *THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON*, which he had a leading role in opposite Brad Pitt, *X-MEN: FIRST CLASS*, *THE SOCIAL NETWORK*, *I GIVE IT A YEAR*, *WELCOME TO THE PUNCH*, *GEMMA BOVERY* and Lance Nielson's *THE JOURNEY* which Flemyng also executive produced. Flemyng recently made his directorial debut on *EAT LOCAL* that was released in 2017.

LISTE ARTISTIQUE / CAST

Kate
Lisa
Richard
Crooks
Annie
Jess
Ruby
Sarah
Frankie

KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS
SHARON HOGAN
GREG WISE
JASON FLEMYNG
EMMA LOWNDES
GABY FRENCH
LARA ROSSI
AMY JAMES KELLY
INDIA RIA AMARTEIFIO

LISTE TECHNIQUE /CREW

Réalisateur / Regisseur

PETER CATTANEO

Scénario

RACHEL TUNNARD, ROSANNE FLYNN

DoP

HUBERT TACZANOWSKI

Edition / Montage

LESLEY WALKER, ANNE SOPEL

BO / Musique

LORNE BALFE

Producteur / Hoofdproducent

RORY AITKEN, BEN PUGH,
PIERS TEMPEST

Décors / Production design

JOHN BEARD

Costumes / Kostuums

JILL TAYLOR

Make-up

CHARLOTTE HAYWARD

Superviseur musical / Music Supervisor

LIZ GALLACHER