



L-R Dayna (Tabitha Byron) Lucy (Sophia Di Martino) Tina (Jo Hartley) AJ (Nell Barlow) Steve (Samuel Anderson)

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SWEETHEART PRESS KIT**FILM INFO**

Title: Sweetheart

Running Time: 103 minutes

Writer/Director: Marley Morrison

Producer: Michelle Antoniadis

Film Genre: Comedy/Romance/LGBTQ+/Coming-of-age

Language: English

Filming Location: Freshwater Beach Holiday Park, Dorset, England, UK

Production Company: Hazey Jane Films

Commissioners: Film London, British Film Institute, BBC Films

In Association With: Bohemia Media and Sums Film & Media

UK Distributor: Peccadillo Pictures

Festival Awards: Audience Award - Glasgow Film Fest 2021
Best First Feature - InsideOut Toronto 2021

IMDB: <https://m.imdb.com/title/tt10919362/>

SOCIALS:

Director's Twitter handle: @marley_morrison

Film Twitter handle: @Film_Sweetheart

Production company: @hazeyjanefilms

Director's Instagram handle: @marley_morrison

Film Instagram handle: @sweetheart_film

Production company: @hazeyjanefilms

ONE LINE SYNOPSIS:

A socially awkward lesbian teenager falls in love for the first time whilst holidaying at a British holiday park.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

A socially awkward, environmentally conscious misfit named AJ becomes unexpectedly captivated by a chlorine smelling, sun-loving lifeguard named Isla whilst on a depressing caravan holiday with her family.

LONG SYNOPSIS:

Socially awkward and environmentally conscious teen 'AJ' has a few things on her mind. Mostly how the methane from all the cows is destroying the planet, and how she would rather be anywhere in the world than on holiday with her painfully uninspiring family.

Following AJ's suspension from school, mum Tina has dragged AJ out of her bedroom and driven four hours to the family's favourite coastal holiday park in Dorset. Joining them is AJ's neurotic and heavily pregnant older sister Lucy, their curious younger sister Dayna and Lucy's foot-rubbing, attentive boyfriend Steve.

For AJ, the only thing worse than spending an entire week with her uniquely 'un-woke' family, is being in a holiday cabin with no Wi-Fi. She's determined to have the worst week of her life, but her plan comes unstuck when she meets carefree lifeguard Isla who sees through AJ'S uniquely adopted persona. With echoes of 'My so called life' and 'Juno' -

SWEETHEART is a quirky, nostalgic coming of age tale for a new generation.

WRITER/DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY: Marley Morrison

With a background in music videos, Marley's first narrative short, 'Sticks & Stones' was screened as part of the BFI Future Film; RAW shorts festival 2014. Marley was one of six filmmakers chosen for the Encounters Film Festival, 'Widening The Lens' competition 2016, earning 1st Prize for pitching short film 'Baby Gravy', a comedy about same-sex parenting. The short was later chosen as part of Film London's, 'London Calling' scheme, premiering at BFI London Film Festival 2017 and nominated for the screenwriting award at Underwire Film Festival 2018. Marley's crowd-funded short film 'Leroy' starring Nathan Bryon has screened at a number of high profile film festivals including LSFF, Aesthetica and was nominated for the prestigious LGBT Iris Prize Best British Short and Youth Jury Award 2018. In 2020 Marley was selected as a Film London 'Lodestar' celebrating the capital's emerging creatives. 'Sweetheart' is Marley's debut feature, WINNER of the Glasgow Film Festival Audience Award 2021. The film was made as part of the Film London Microwave scheme, supported by the British Film Institute and BBC Films.

WRITER/DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"The desire to tell this story was born out of my own teenage battles with gender identity and sexuality and its ability to consume the psyche of an adolescent who hasn't quite learnt how to navigate the world as a young lesbian.

I am interested in the way queer visibility and freedom of expression has changed over generations, and how that impacts a family, when confronted with the reality of an ever-changing world inside their own nuclear unit.

I hope to bring visibility to the people who don't fall under society's expectations of a female and to allow specifically lesbian perspectives to be at the forefront. My hope is that the film will be an uplifting and joyful experience, full of colour, humour, youthful energy and heart. Thus reflecting the rush and excitement of falling in love for the first time, whoever you are, and how when we let go of our constructed ideas of ourselves we are free to live without shame"

– *Marley Morrison*

PRINCIPAL CAST

(L-R) Nell Barlow as AJ, Ella-Rae Smith as Isla

NELL BARLOW - 'AJ'

SWEETHEART is Nell's first feature and also her first leading role. She graduated from the University of East Anglia with a First Class degree in Drama in 2017. In 2016 whilst still at UEA, she made her small screen debut as Beatrice Gresham in Julian Fellowes' screen adaptation of Anthony Trollope's novel DOCTOR THORNE, directed by Niall MacCormick for ITV/Amazon. Her next role was Lucy in Channel 4's controversial, true life drama MARRIED TO A PAEDOPHILE, directed by Collete Camden for Hat Trick. She also voices Elsa Platt in the upcoming animation WHERE IS ANNE FRANK?, directed by Oscar-nominee Ari Folman, which is due for release in 2021.

[IMDB](#)

ELLA-RAE SMITH - 'Isla'

Ella-Rae Smith is best known for her roles as Daisy Hoy in Netflix's eight-part British mystery thriller THE STRANGER and as Nix in AMC's martial arts Drama Series INTO THE BADLANDS. Other noteworthy television credits include her portrayal of Phoebe Parker-Fox in the much loved BBC series CLIQUE, as Fola in Netflix's THE WITCHER, and as Mia in her TV debut for UK TV's MARLEY'S GHOSTS. Ella-Rae has starred in an array of films including D. James Newton's 2:Hrs, Lionsgate's THE COMMUTER with Liam Neeson and British/Polish drama BUTTERFLY KISSES. She will next be seen starring alongside Suki Waterhouse in the upcoming indie horror SÉANCE (Hanway Films) and has recently completed filming the movie THE LOST GIRLS alongside Louis Partridge and Vanessa Redgrave which centres around Peter Pan's Wendy.

[IMDB](#)

JO HARTLEY - 'Tina'

Manchester-born Jo Hartley has appeared in some of the UK's most cutting edge films and dramas. Starting her professional career in Shane Meadows' dark, emotionally turbo-charged and disturbing DEAD MAN'S SHOES with the sublime Paddy Considine and Toby Kebbell, her career to date has shown huge range and versatility. "Hartley belongs to a tribe of actors and directors who have formed a new wave of talent intent upon modernising British cinematic storytelling" says The Huffington Post.

Jo was recently seen starring in the BBC Three comedy-drama IN MY SKIN. Jo took a leading role as Trina, a mother who has bi-polar. It piloted in 2018 to critical acclaim, with it claiming a BAFTA Wales Award for Best TV Drama. The Independent call it "an absolute Joy" and The Times saying "Jo Hartley's performance as a woman sections was outstanding."

In 2020, Jo also reprised her role as 'June' in the second season of Ricky Gervais' critically acclaimed comedy drama AFTER LIFE for Netflix with Diane Morgan, Ashley Jensen. The series was one of Netflix's most watched originals.

Perhaps her best known for her as the warm and lovable 'Cynth' in the universally loved and multi award-winning THIS IS ENGLAND. In film Jo has also appeared in the highly acclaimed EDDIE THE EAGLE starring Taron Egerton and as 'Pauline' in Ricky Gervais' LIFE ON THE ROAD, which is a follow on from The Office and David Brent's character, played by Gervais, and she was also seen in SLAUGHTERHOUSE RULEZ which boasts a stellar class including Simon Pegg, Michael Sheen, Nick Frost and Asa Butterfield.

Jo has starred alongside some of Britain's most esteemed acting talent, such as with Julie Walters in THE JURY, Damian Lewis and Vicky McClure in STOLEN; John Simm and Joanne Froggatt in MOVING ON; with Stephen Mangan in Sky One's BLISS; VERA with the great Brenda Blethyn.

"Look out for Jo Hartley as Jean, she's very good" is how The Independent described Jo in Channel 4 comedy drama THE MIMIC and NOT SAFE FOR WORK, for the same channel, showcased her fine-tuned comedic timing. She has also been seen in ITV's TORVILL AND DEAN, SICK OF IT with Karl Pilkington, TEMPLE and DON'T FORGET THE DRIVER.

Jo plays the role of AJ's mum, Tina, in Marley Morrison's upcoming debut film SWEETHEART.

[IMDB](#)

SUPPORTING CAST

Artist Name	Character name	Credits	IMDB
Sophia Di Martino	'Lucy'	Loki Yesterday Flowers	IMDB
Samuel Anderson	'Steve'	Dr Who Gavin & Stacey	IMDB
Tabitha Byron	'Dayna'	The Third Day Hetty Feather	IMDB
Steffan Cennydd	'Nathan'	The Pembrokeshire Murders	IMDB
William Andrews	'Phil the Magician'	Bulletproof The Tracey Ullman Show Broadchurch	IMDB
Anna Antoniadou	'Gemma G'	Mamma Mia - Here we go again The Durrells	IMDB
Spike Fearn	'Elvis'		IMDB

CREATIVE TEAM:**PRODUCER: Michelle Antoniadis** [IMDB](#)

Michelle is a London based creative producer with a background in business management. She started out as a Production Coordinator in factual TV and feature documentaries. In 2013 Michelle joined Marley Morrison to form Hazy Jane Films, with a shared vision to develop and produce original female led and LGBTQ+ stories.

Short film credits include *LEROY*, nominated for Iris Prize Best British Short and Underwire Emerging Producer Award, plus the BFI Network funded *BABY GRAVY* which premiered at BFI London Film Festival 2017.

Michelle previously produced children's comedy series *ANGRY BIRDS ON THE RUN* with Blink Industries and Rovio Entertainment, now in it's second series.

SWEETHEART is Michelle's first feature, supported by the BFI, BBC Films and funded via the Film London Microwave scheme.

Michelle regularly works with [GREEN SCREEN EU](#), to make productions more environmentally responsible and sustainable and was chosen as part of [Film London's Lodestars 2020](#).

DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY:

1. Matt Wicks <https://www.mattwicksdop.com/>
2. Emily Almond Barr <https://www.emilyalmondbarr.com/about>

EDITOR: Keelan Gumbley <http://www.keelan-gumbley.com/>

PRODUCTION DESIGNER: Carys Beard <http://www.carysbeard.com/>

COSTUME DESIGNER: Amy Louise Thompson <https://www.amythompsoncostume.com/>

CASTING BY: Carolyn McLeod <http://www.cmcasting.co.uk/>

PHOTOGRAPHER: Chloe Sheppard <https://chloesheppard.com/>

ABOUT HAZEY JANE FILMS:

Hazy Jane Films was founded with the aim of creating a home for authored, bold and distinctive stories by underrepresented filmmakers. We are a company driven by the need to increase visibility of women and minority groups, specifically the LGBTQ+ community.

[Website](#)

[Company Credits](#)

THE FILM LONDON MICROWAVE SCHEME:

Microwave's second slate of 6 films, of which "Sweetheart" is the latest to go into post production, was developed in partnership with BBC Films and the BFI. Microwave is Film London's flagship feature film scheme. It serves to inspire and develop the capital's best new filmmakers, empowering them to make bold, compelling features, for a micro-budget, that will surprise and excite global audiences. An initial slate of 8 films was made in partnership with BBC Films between 2006 and 2012 with a further slate from 2014 - 2020. All achieved theatrical releases, and many have gone on to receive critical recognition both in the UK and internationally.

Notable Nominations and Awards for Microwave Films:

Looted (2020) Premiered at Tallinn Black Nights 2019 winning the award for Best Film and later nominated for the BIFA Raindance Discovery Award in December 2020.

Body of Water (2020) Longlisted for the BIFA Raindance Discovery Award in December 2020.

Lilting (2014) winner of the Cinematography Award (World Cinema - Dramatic) premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival. Nominated for Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer at the BAFTA Awards and Best Achievement in Production and Douglas Hickox Awards at BIFA.

iLL Manors (2012) winner of the Coup de Coeur and Best Cinematography awards at the 2013 Dinar British Film Festival. Nominated for three British Independent Film Awards along with Breakthrough British Filmmaker at London Critics Circle Film Awards.

Shifty (2008) nominated for the 2010 BAFTA award for 'Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director, or Producer', and 'Best Achievement in Production' and 'Best Technical Achievement' at BIFA. Won 'Best Screenplay' at Stockholm Film Festival, 'Best Feature Film Screenplay (Newcomer)' at the Writers' Guild of Great Britain awards, and the Geneva Cinéma Tout Ecran 'Best Actor' award.