

THE HAPPY SAD
Introduction / Credits

THE HAPPY SAD

WRITTEN BY KEN URBAN / DIRECTED BY RODNEY EVANS

SYNOPSIS

Two young couples in New York—one black and gay, one white and heterosexual—find their lives intertwined as they create new relationship norms, explore sexual identity, and redefine monogamy.

KEY PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER/EDITOR --- Rodney Evans (*Brother To Brother*)

PRODUCERS --- Tory Lenosky (Executive Producer, *Shit Year*), Esra Saydam (*I Am John Wayne*)

WRITER --- Ken Urban (*The Correspondent*)

CASTING DIRECTORS --- Susan Shopmaker (*Hedwig and The Angry Inch*, *Shortbus*, *Martha Marcy May Marlene*), Lois Drabkin (*Night Catches Us*)

EDITOR --- Sabine Hoffman (*Personal Velocity*, *The Ballad of Jack and Rose*)

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY – Arlene Muller (*Topo Gigio Is Dead*)

CAST

MARCUS --- LeRoy McClain (*The History Boys*)

ANNIE --- Sorel Carradine (*The Good Doctor*)

AARON --- Charlie Barnett (*Gayby*, *Chicago Fire*)

STAN --- Cameron Scoggins (*Lovers*)

MANDY --- Maria Dizzia (*Martha Marcy May Marlene*, *Louie*)

ALICE --- Sue Jean Kim (*Bachelorette*)

NEIL --- Jamie Harrold (*Erin Brockovich*, *The New Tenants*-2010 Academy Award Winner-Best Live Action short)

DAVID --- Michael Nathanson (*Side Effects*, *Time Freak*-2012 Academy Award Nomination-Best Live Action short)

THE HAPPY SAD

Synopsis

Armed with art and unbridled optimism, Stan brunches with his girlfriend Annie, a schoolteacher, only to discover that she wants to take a break. Aaron confronts his boyfriend Marcus about their open relationship. The lives of these two couples become intertwined when Stan and Marcus meet online and hook up. Apparently, Stan has a bi-side, and Aaron walks in on the aftermath of Marcus and Stan's afternoon tryst. Meanwhile, Annie goes on a blind date with an older man David who makes his living writing scripts for reality TV shows, which feels more "real" than Stan's afternoons spent in the rehearsal space with his band. Annie confides in her fellow teacher Mandy about her relationship troubles. Mandy and Annie engage in some flirtation and decide to try a lesbian relationship, which, in turn, reminds Annie that perhaps she was in love with Stan all along. Eventually all of these characters must face the consequences of their choices and decide what matters to them most.

The film uses the multi-cultural ensemble to explore the questions that alternative twenty- and thirty-year olds face in a culture where there appears to be endless possibilities for sex but also a resistance to any definitive model for a "proper" relationship. The film juxtaposes the storylines of the two main couples of different races (Marcus and Aaron, Stan and Annie) to highlight the ethical dilemmas facing men and women who are trying to create new ways to be in a loving relationship, while recognizing that monogamy might not be for them. Since music is a crucial means of creating bonds and establishing connections for young New Yorkers, the film prominently features original indie rock songs written by the screenwriter, Ken Urban, and actor Cameron Scoggins along with his band THE WHISKEY COLLECTION.

THE HAPPY SAD

Cast Biographies

LEROY MCCLAIN (*Marcus*) has appeared on Broadway in *Cymbeline* and *The History Boys*. His Off-Broadway credits include *Measure for Measure*, *Othello* with Philip Seymour Hoffman and Jessica Chastain, *The Good Negro* at The Public Theater and the lead role in *Hamlet* at the California Shakespeare Festival in 2012. His film and TV credits include a recurring role on *Rubicon*, *Law and Order* and *The Adjustment Bureau*. McClain holds an MFA in Acting from the Yale School of Drama.

SOREL CARRADINE (*Annie*) has a BFA from the USC School of Theater. She was featured in a pivotal role opposite Orlando Bloom in the feature film *The Good Doctor* which premiered at the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival and was released theatrically by Magnolia Pictures. Carradine was also recently featured in a major guest role on the TNT series *Southland*.

CHARLIE BARNETT (*Aaron*) is a series regular on the hit NBC series *Chicago Fire* produced by Dick Wolf. His film and television credits include *Men In Black 3*, *Gayby*, *Private Romeo* and a guest lead role on *Law and Order: Special Victim's Unit*. Barnett graduated from Julliard in 2010 with a BFA in Acting.

CAMERON SCOGGINS (*Stan*) was featured in major roles in the recent off-Broadway productions of *The Big Meal* at Playwrights Horizons, *Lovers* at The Actor's Company Theater and *King Lear*. He was recently featured in guest roles on the TV series *The Good Wife* and *Elementary*. Scoggins is the lead vocalist, guitarist and songwriter for the band, *The Whiskey Collection*. Their original songs *Oh Darlin'* and *Lazy Jim* are prominently featured in *The Happy Sad*. He graduated from Julliard with a BFA in Acting in 2011.

MARIA DIZZIA (*Mandy*) was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Performance by a Featured Actress for *In the Next Room or The Vibrator Play* by Sarah Ruhl. She recently starred in *Uncle Vanya* with Michael Shannon at Soho Rep and *Belleville* at NY Theater Workshop. Her other off-Broadway credits include *Cradle and All*, *The Hallway Trilogy*, *The Drunken City* and *Eurydice*. She had a prominent role in the feature film *Martha Marcy May Marlene* which was released theatrically by Fox Searchlight Pictures. Dizzia was recently featured in a major guest role on the FX series *Louie*. Her other film and television credits include *Margin Call*, *Rachel Getting Married*, *Law and Order* and *Fringe*. She holds an MFA degree from UC San Diego and is an Associate Artist with the NY-based theater collective The Civilians.

SUE JEAN KIM (*Alice*) was featured in *Bachelorette* which premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival and was released theatrically by Radius-TWC. Her other film and television credits include *Glee*, *Nurse Jackie* and *Fringe*. She had roles in the recent Off-Broadway productions of *Assistance*, *The Drunken City* and *Water by the Spoonful*.

THE HAPPY SAD

Cast Biographies, continued

JAMIE HARROLD (*Neil*) has appeared in the feature films *Erin Brockovich*, *I Shot Andy Warhol* and *I Think I Do*. He starred in the 2010 short film *The New Tenants* which won an Academy Award for Best Short-Live Action. His other film and television credits include *The Sum of All Fears*, *Roseanne*, *Kingdom Hospital*, *The Score* and *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything Julie Newmar*.

MICHAEL NATHANSON (*David*) starred in the short film *Time Freak* which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Short-Live Action in 2012. His other film and television credits include *Young Adult*, *30 Rock*, *Elementary*, *Rescue Me* and *The Good Wife*. He has a prominent role in the feature film *Side Effects* (directed by Steven Soderbergh) and will also be featured in *The Wolf of Wall Street* (directed by Martin Scorsese).

THE HAPPY SAD Crew Biographies

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER/EDITOR - Rodney Evans is the recipient of The Independent Feature Project's Gordon Parks Award for Screenwriting for his screenplay, *Brother To Brother*. This film premiered at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival where it won the Special Jury Prize in Drama. *Brother To Brother* had its European premiere at The Berlin International Film Festival in February 2004 and was nominated for 4 Independent Spirit Awards including Best First Film and Best Debut Performance for Anthony Mackie (*The Hurt Locker*). His second feature-length screenplay, *Day Dream*, was the first place winner of the Newfest Screenplay competition. His recent short film, *Billy and Aaron*, premiered at the 2010 Tribeca Film Festival. Evans was a Creative Capital Grantee and a Guggenheim Fellow for 2008/09.

PRODUCER – Tory Lenosky was an executive producer on Cam Archer's second feature film *Shit Year* which premiered in 2010 in the Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival. She line produced Ira Sachs' *Keep The Lights On* which premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival in Dramatic Competition and was nominated for 4 Independent Spirit Awards including best feature. In 2012, she was awarded a Sundance Producing Fellowship as a Mark Silverman honoree with producing partner Lucas Joaquin for their project *Bright As Day*. She is currently set to produce *Why Now?!* starring Marisa Tomei and Sam Rockwell, Sarah Daggar-Nickson's first feature *From The Shadows It Will Come*, and co-produce acclaimed actor Ben Foster's directorial debut *Angelhead*.

PRODUCER – Esra Saydam is a recent graduate of Columbia University's MFA Film Program and produced over ten short films there including *I am John Wayne* which won the Grand Jury Prize at Slamdance 2012. Her latest short film as a director, *Fair Lawn* was screened at Seattle International Film Festival and broadcast on NYC TV.

WRITER - Ken Urban's plays have been produced and developed at Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Summer Plays Festival @ The Public, Donmar Warehouse (London), The Flea, Studio 42, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Playwrights Horizons, Irish Rep, Primary Stages, and The Huntington. His play *The Correspondent* will be produced as part of Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre's 2013-14 season. Awards include the Weissberger Playwriting Award, Huntington Playwriting Fellowship, Dramatist Guild Fellowship, MacDowell Colony Fellowships and SPF/Donmar Warehouse Residency. His feature film adaptation of his play *The Happy Sad*, directed by Rodney Evans, will premiere at film festivals in the summer of 2013. Ken has taught writing at Harvard University, Tufts University, Rutgers University, Bucknell University and the Einhorn School of Performing Arts at Primary Stages.

CASTING DIRECTOR - *Susan Shopmaker* is best known for her collaboration with John Cameron Mitchell, both on *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* and *Shortbus*. She has contributed to a wide variety of award-winning projects including the 2011 Sundance winner, *Martha Marcy May Marlene* directed by Sean Durkin, Robert Altman's *Tanner on Tanner* (written by Garry Trudeau), *American Violet* and Tze Chung's *Children of Invention*. She was the New York Casting Director on *Something's Gotta Give* (Jack Nicholson, Diane Keaton) and *The Holiday* (Cameron Diaz, Kate Winslet) and was Executive Producer and Casting Director for Antonio Campos' *Afterschool* which debuted in the Un Certain Regard section of the 2008 Cannes Film Festival

EDITOR - *Sabine Hoffman's* editing credits include *Personal Velocity*, winner of the Dramatic Grand Jury Prize and Best Cinematography Award at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival. Her earlier editing credits include Morgan J. Freeman's *Hurricane Streets*, which won Best Director, Best Cinematography and the Audience Award at the 1997 Sundance Film Festival and Alex Sichel's *All Over Me* which won the Teddy Award for Best Dramatic Feature at the 1997 Berlin Film Festival. Other editing credits include *The Ballad of Jack and Rose* starring Daniel Day-Lewis, *Off The Black* starring Nick Nolte and *The Private Lives of Pippa Lee*, starring Robin Wright Penn, Alan Arkin, Julianne Moore and Keanu Reeves. Hoffman recently completed editing on *May In The Summer* which was chosen as the opening night film of the 2013 Sundance Film Festival.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY - *Arlene Muller* grew up in Brooklyn, got her degree in cinematography from the National Film School of Poland in Lodz, and now divides her time working and living between New York and Los Angeles. Her D.P. credits include *Not Interested* (2009 SXSW Film Festival) and *Topo Gigio is Dead*.

THE HAPPY SAD

Director's Statement

I am the director/producer of THE HAPPY SAD, an adaptation of a stage play by Ken Urban. Ken and I met when we both had residencies at the Macdowell Colony in 2008. We both sensed a connection in the work that we were doing and stayed in touch in the subsequent months. I went to a performance of the stage version of THE HAPPY SAD at the Summer Plays Festival at the Public Theater in New York in 2009 and was extremely moved by it. I immediately saw its potential as a film and when I mentioned that to Ken he told me he had already begun adapting it into a screenplay.

The quirky sensibility of THE HAPPY SAD is similar in style to recent films like 500 DAYS OF SUMMER by Marc Webb, ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND by Michel Gondry and ME AND YOU AND EVERYONE WE KNOW by Miranda July, three independent films that explored the inner workings of relationships. But what sets THE HAPPY SAD apart from those films is how gay and bisexual characters are not at the periphery or absent, but taken seriously while forming the center of the narrative. The goal was to create gay and bisexual characters that are as richly examined as the straight protagonists in those films. The overwhelmingly positive response and sold-out audiences for the stage production demonstrated the need and desire for a seriocomic exploration of contemporary relationships. Thinking about recent micro-budget features like ONCE, TINY FURNITURE and HUMPDAY we began strategizing about how to make the film with a similar production model using personal connections to actors and in-kind resources available to me in New York. Mr. Urban completed several drafts of the screenplay that reimagines the story of the four principal characters for the screen. Principal photography was completed in July 2011 over the course of 16 days and the project received financial support from The Creative Capital Foundation, The NY State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), Frameline and The Philadelphia Independent Film and Video Association (PIFVA).

-Rodney Evans

Critical Acclaim for BROTHER TO BROTHER

“The Harlem Renaissance comes thrillingly alive in Rodney Evans’s evocative and profoundly moving feature film” -Dennis Dermody, Paper

“Breathtaking...a fascinating and absorbing tale...heralds the emergence of an exciting new voice in filmmaking” -Kirk Honeycutt, The Hollywood Reporter

“A captivating drama....Tremendously accomplished filmmaking by writer/director Rodney Evans” -David Germain, The Associated Press

“The story Evans tells of the spiritual link between a contemporary black gay New York artist and the trailblazers of the 1930’s Harlem Renaissance is an excitingly ambitious one, conveyed with guileless passion of purpose”
-Owen Gleiberman, Entertainment Weekly

“A well-acted work of grace and depth”
-Kevin Thomas, LA Times

“Haunting...a film of great beauty and conscience”
-Marjorie Baumgarten, The Austin Chronicle

“BROTHER TO BROTHER brings depth and intelligence to black politics and sexuality”
-David Rooney, Variety

“Excellent...a gifted cast brings to vibrant, sexy life the likes of Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin and Eldridge Cleaver, and in the process conjures the neatest hat trick of all — making the loves and woes of the past resonate with those of the present.”
-Chuck Wilson, LA Weekly

“Heartfelt. Filled with ideas and nice acting, especially from Mackie and Robinson”
-Manohla Dargis, NY Times

“Mackie and Robinson are superb actors...has the quiet urgency of a story that must be told.”
-Carrie Rickey, Philadelphia Inquirer

“An instantaneous classic. BROTHER TO BROTHER is an extraordinarily brave, uncompromising, witty and riveting cinematic debut from writer/director Rodney Evans. A gem of a movie that should not and cannot be easily dismissed”
-Natasha Grant, NY Amsterdam News