

THEIR SONG WILL HAUNT YOU



# THE ISLE

GREAT POINT MEDIA PRESENTS A FIZZ AND GINGER FILMS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH CLEVES MEDIA LIMITED "THE ISLE" CONLETH HILL ALEX HASSELL  
FISAYO AKINADE TORI BUTLER HART ALIX WILTON REGAN GRAHAM BUTLER DICKON TYRRELL EMMA KING JOE BANNISTER BEN LEE  
CO-PRODUCED BY GARETH JONES MUSIC BY TOM KANE EDITED BY WILLIAM HONEYBALL PRODUCTION DESIGNERS GINI GODWIN SOPHIA STOCCO DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY PETE WALLINGTON  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JIM REEVE ROBERT HALMI JR WENDY MUIR HART CHRISTOPHER HART NIGEL WARREN-THOMAS SUSAN WARREN-THOMAS  
ANTHONY PYE-JEARY CONLETH HILL WRITTEN BY TORI AND MATTHEW BUTLER HART PRODUCED BY TORI BUTLER HART DIRECTED BY MATTHEW BUTLER HART

"Fizz and Ginger Films' *The Isle* is the kind of cinema that is getting far too rare. Superbly shot, exquisitely paced and genuinely compelling and surprising - indeed astonishing - in its development of plot and character. I felt I was on this island, with these three shipwrecked souls, experiencing what they experienced for every minute of its (beautifully concise!) length. You know how cheap, crash bang wallop films never stay with you, but dissipate like steam the moment you're out of the cinema? *The Isle* is exactly the opposite, the atmosphere and the world it evokes stay with you a long, long time - every frame seems memorable without ever being over-composed or artful for the sake of it: every film-making element is at the service of story-telling. Matthew and Tori Butler Hart (I don't know which is Fizz and which is Ginger) have emerged as one of the most exciting, talented, intelligent and imaginative teams working in British film today and this wonderful piece of quality entertainment only adds lustre to that growing reputation."

*Stephen Fry*

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Set in 1846 on a remote island off the west coast of Scotland, a heavy storm causes a merchant ship to sink. The film opens with its three survivors rowing through a thick early morning mist, lost and disorientated. The fog begins to clear and *The Isle* appears before them.

Abandoned except for four sole residents, an old harbor man, a farmer, his niece and a young mad woman, the isle is anything but welcoming. These people clearly haven't seen anyone from the outside world for some time and their reluctance to help the sailors back to the mainland is evident.

Once rested, the three men are desperate to return home but the promised boat never appears. One of the sailors starts to question what happened on the island and why the people abandoned it so quickly. Through his investigation he discovers that every year around the same date a tragedy at sea would occur and young men from the island would perish.

When his two shipmates meet with fatal accidents, the myth of a ghostly siren haunting the island leads him to try and uncover the truth while he battles to save his own life and escape the clutches of the island.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### PRODUCERS

Tori and Matthew Butler Hart run Fizz and Ginger Films and this is their third feature film together having completed 18th century comedy *Miss In Her Teens*, with Ian McKellen and Simon Callow, and *Two Down* which was executive produced by Stephen Fry and Sir Derek Jacobi. They were chosen by Screen International for their 'Stars of Tomorrow' edition in 2013. Before starting the company together Matthew had produced feature film *Symmetry of Love* for the Spanish director Aitor Gaizka and Tori had been producing theatre in London.



Gareth Jones, co-producer, started off his career as a production lawyer before moving into film sales being involved with dozens of features including *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, *Withnail And I*, and *Secretary*. He recently completing the critically acclaimed *Mum's List* with Rafe Spall and Emilia Fox and his sales company released *Damascus Cover* starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers .

## DIRECTOR

Matthew directed his first short film at the age of fourteen before training as an actor in London. It was in 2009, after finding his way back into directing for film and theatre, that he co-founded Fizz and Ginger Films with Tori. For the company he directed various short films, all of which won awards around the globe, and then moved to feature films by way of TV movie *Miss In Her Teens* based on an 18th century comedy. With the success of this he was able to get the backing to make *Two Down*, which he co-wrote with Tori, and which went on to win awards at every festival it entered.



# CAST

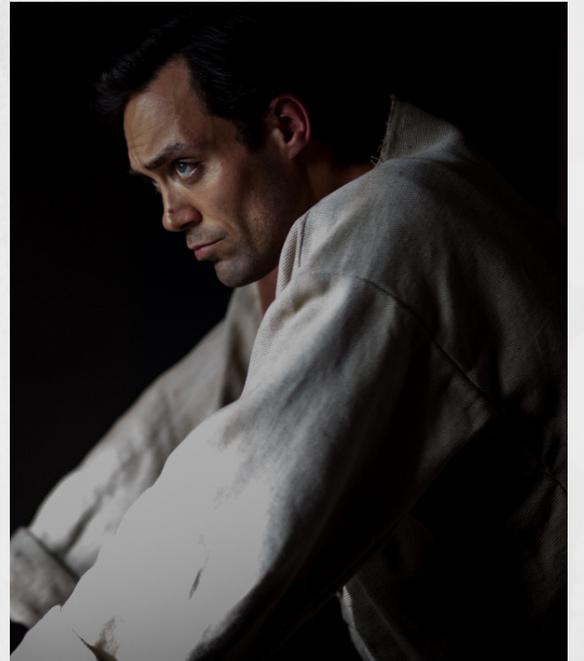
## CONLETH HILL

Conleth is best known for playing the eunuch Lord Varys in HBO's Game of Thrones and is also an Olivier award winning, Tony nominated, theatre actor in the UK and US.



## ALEX HASSELL

Alex has starred in many production with the RSC including Prince Hal in Henry V and VI. He is the lead in the multi-award winning Two Down, stars in Surburbicon, directed by George Clooney and played the lead in the BBC adaptation of The Miniaturist



## FISAYO AKINADE

Although new to the industry Fisayo has already made a big splash with Channel 4's Cucumber and Banana, and in the BAFTA nominated Girl With All the Gifts with Glenn Close and Gemma Arterton.



# TORI BUTLER HART

Tori is also the co-writer and producer of *The Isle*. Previous screen credits include the female lead in award winning films *Two Down*, *Keeping Rosy* with Maxine Peake and *Edie* with Sheila Hancock.



# ALIX WILTON REGAN

Alix is best known for her numerous roles in video games including, *Dragon Age Inquisition* and *Mass Effect 3*. She has recently played along side Glen Close in *The Wife*.



# GRAHAM BUTLER

Graham starred in the hugely successful TV series, *Penny Dreadful*, as Timothy Dalton's son, Peter. He has also starred in numerous production at the Globe and The National Theatre, including Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*.

# PRODUCTION NOTES

## THE BEGINNING

It was during the post-production on their last feature, *Two Down*, that Tori and Matthew starting thinking about what the next project should be. They knew it they wanted to go in a completely different direction to *Two Down*, which was a seventies inspired black comedy about an injured quirky hit man.

Matthew had always been interested in Greek myths and wanted to incorporate something from one of the ancient tales into a film but it needed a base to be grounded on. It was when associate producer Louis Devereux said that he had access to a small Scottish island that the ideas began to form quite rapidly. Tori and Matthew looked at the area where the island was and quickly realised that the story had to be based in the supernatural.



The island itself, Eilean Shona, was once a thriving community back in the 1800's but over the period of just a few years was quickly abandoned for rather mundane reasons, but it was the kernel that they needed to get started. The main story of the shipwrecks and sirens, inspired by those Greek myths, gave them a strong template to work from and the characters grew around the needs of the story. They didn't want it to just be a classic siren story where the women were two dimensional monsters hell bent on death, but layered people intertwined in a more-than-meets-the-eye story. The success of *Two Down* at festivals around the world helped shine a light on Fizz and Ginger Films and there was suddenly a lot of interest in the next project. It was at the end of the festival run that Laura Macara from Great Point Media saw the film at the BFI in London and immediately invited them to chat about working together. After talking to Laura about various films in development, *The Isle* was the one that struck a chord. Various actors were talked about and approached; and this is when the fun started.

Two of the lead actors were about to be whisked off to *Game of Thrones* and George Clooney's new film, *Suburbicon* so they were suddenly against the clock. Fortunately the team had been steadily prepping, sorting out locations, crew and actors but it still left them with two and a half hours to put together everything needed for a ninety minute period film which included shipwrecks and ghosts, all on an island with no roads and only boats as the means of transport to get there.



## THE ADVENTURE

The two and half weeks of prep were the quickest weeks of the team's life and against the odds gathered all the pieces of the puzzle together, not only in time, but to an amazingly high standard.

Most of the interiors were filmed in a beautiful sunny village in Suffolk in a restored 16th century cottage, which was almost ready to shoot in. It was finds like this, and the island, that made the rather epic film doable on a modest budget. Filming the interiors first wasn't ideal at all though as it was much harder to try and match weather and lighting states rather than doing it the other way around, but because of actor availability it was the only way it could be done.

The interior's shoot flew by and was a lot of fun, and the uniqueness of working in such close proximity and everyone living in little cottages together quickly drew the group together. This was very important for the next few weeks on the island, which weren't always going to be plain sailing. But Fizz and Ginger Films productions are always a lot of fun to work on, and they strive to make sure it feels like a unique experience for everyone.

That's not to say that everything always went to plan. In *The Isle* there are a few effects that needed to happen to create its creepy atmosphere and Matthew has always tried to do as much in-camera, so no computer graphics, as possible. There were a few instances with the ghost where the plans had to be thrown out of the window and some very quick re-thinking had to be done to create the same feeling of unease. But it was a very collaborative project and some brilliant teamwork always came through to create some great scary moments.

*The Isle* has an amazing cast of incredibly talented actors including the very experienced Conleth Hill who lead the cast from the front and with a lot of fun. The blooper reel will almost be as long as the film itself! Matthew always allowed the jokes and fun to happen as the film itself is quite dark and intense and you need the lighter times to interject otherwise you quickly have the feeling of the film envelop the cast and crew, and that way madness lies.



And the real hard work was just around the corner.

After the lovely sunny filming in Suffolk it was time for the main event and everything was packed up and shipped northwards to Eilean Shona, off the west coast of Scotland. The trip up was an adventure in itself as the only way to get there is across a single-track road for over three hours from Glasgow, and then small boats to the island. Although there are cottages on the island there are no roads, so perfect for filming an 19th century film, but tougher in the actual logistics of getting people around.

The main team of director, producers and cinematographer went up a day ahead of the actors and the crossing to the island was done in a force nine gale, which although looked spectacular, worried them somewhat about the next month of exterior filming. Two weeks before, when they had gone to the island on a location recce it was beautiful weather and the physical shooting of the film seemed relatively simple, if hard work. But with the added menace of the unpredictable Scottish weather, carefully laid plans were quickly torn up and rethought, even as the excited cast and crew landed in Glasgow and were slowly making their way towards the team.

Fizz and Ginger Films have always been lucky however, and that luck held out on this production. The budget allowed very little room for error or too many big changes, and with the weather constantly being completely different to the forecast it could have been a disaster. But something was obviously looking out them and even terrifying storms and sinking boats didn't stop production, and in fact added to not only the look of the film, but also the fun.

The cast and crew could see that the film that was being created was something special, and when you can see that you are working on a project like that it makes even the hardest days seem easier.

Everyone living in the same large house, eating and drinking together and having no television, and very little Wi-Fi, quickly brought the group even closer. That close vibe can be seen on the screen and gives another level to the film, feeling as if you are genuinely on the island with them.

The island was spectacular and almost every way you pointed the camera you had another stunning backdrop. The problem was that it was all a lot larger than the story required, the 'isle' being walkable in an hour, so they had to battle temptation to show off the incredible scenery. But it also reminded them that the island had to be as important a character, and the storytelling, as the lead actors, and that every shot has to be absolutely necessary to the story.

After a mere eighteen days of actual shooting, ninety pages of script had been done, everything scene was done and looking great. Matthew likes to have the editor, Will Honeyball, on set to be able to discuss scenes and ideas as they go and to do their best to make sure they have as much footage as possible to tell the story.

So with heavy hearts the team reluctantly said goodbye to Eilean Shona and made their way back to the real world...



## POST PRODUCTION

For Matthew, Tori and Will the bulk of the work was just beginning. It was straight into the edit for Will to do the first assembly of exactly what was shot in the order of the script so they can see the story as it was written.

And then the real fun begins. The edit actually happened relatively quickly, at least up to a point where there was only tweaking to be done. Matthew and Tori write with a view that you get the script, and the characters, to a point where the arcs demand that the scenes stay in the order that you put them. If you can move them around too easily it means that the characters are not following a clear arc and the story is not as properly structured as it could be.

As it is a supernatural thriller, however, it means that various sections of creepy goings on could be moved around to change the pace, or level, of spookiness. And this is what the team spent most of the time playing with and sending it back to the investors to get their opinion.

This is the first time Tori and Matthew had ever had to deal with feedback from an outside source and it was a very interesting experience to have very different sets of eyes coming back with notes and a lot of fun seeing what worked and what didn't.

After a six-week edit, which is pretty quick, they moved into the sound design side of things. The sound was always going to be a huge part of the film, and indeed the storytelling, so it was given a big chunk of the post-production time devoted to it. One of the film's main points is the siren's song, which calls sailors to the rocks to wreck and drown. It is what heralds danger and the influence of something otherworldly on the island so the song that was created for it is intertwined in a massive sound design, including all the ghostly whispers and strange island sounds. Matthew, Tori and Will are very specific about sound and understand how important it must be in a film, bad sound can kill a good film, and are all very specific about how they want things, so also did the foley and sound design themselves.



After a very short Christmas break, and whilst the sound was taking shape, it was time to go into the post-production house, Onsight in London, and work on the grade of the film. Again it was always part of the plan to use colour as part of the storytelling. The filming had been timed around full moons, which would be their source of light for a lot of scenes both inside and out and they were lucky enough to witness, and film, super moon. This gave it a natural, but eerie, feel to the film with only a few candles as light sources otherwise, and gave the team lots of room to play when it came to the grading.

When all the pieces, including the exquisite music by Tom Kane and siren's song sung by Faroese singer Eivør, had finally been completed and put together, it was time for the investor's screening. Always slightly nerve-wracking for filmmakers the screening went down a storm and after some excellent notes to clarify a couple of things the film was finished.

The end result is a film much bigger in scale than anyone could have imagined possible in that amount of time and on a modest budget such as they had. The Isle is a layered, entertaining, supernatural thriller that will have audiences thinking about it for days after seeing it. And that is the highest compliment filmmakers can ask for.