



mono

Written and directed by
Richard Smith

Produced by
Abigail Howkins

Starring:
Samantha Young (as Emily)
Ainslie Henderson (as Jay)

With:
Shakti Edwards (as Linda)
Gerry Lynch (as Gary)

Running Time: 10 minutes
BBFC Certification: TBC
UK Distribution: TBC

www.monothemovie.co.uk
mail@monothemovie.co.uk

A GMAC/Digicult production in association with Scottish Screen
Made with support of the UK Film Council New Cinema Fund and the National Lottery through Scottish Screen

PRESS KIT

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Synopses

When Emily's quiet life is disrupted by a noisy musician moving in next door, the outcome is far from muted... (20)

Two lonely people – Emily and Jay – find themselves living on opposite sides of the same wall. As they become moved by the sounds of each other, they begin communicating through the wall. They engage and connect. After a terrible aural misunderstanding, the silence is deafening, and it's up to Emily to break the divide... (54 words)

Production notes

Mono is the short directorial debut of Richard Smith, award-winning writer of psychological chiller *Trauma*, (directed by Marc Evans, starring Colin Firth and Mena Suvari and produced by Warner Bros/Little Bird/BBC Films) and television drama *Leonard* (starring Dennis Lawson and Stuart Wilkinson, directed by Brian Kelly and produced by Stella Maris Films/Scottish Media Group/Scottish Screen)

Mono is an urban love story about two young city dwellers – lonely in their separate ways – who find themselves living next door to each other in a flimsily renovated apartment block and slowly fall in love through the wall dividing their flats, and them.

Mono features a great cast of new faces to the screen, Samantha Young as Emily, Ainslie Henderson as Jay and Shakti Edwards as Linda.

Mono is a Glasgow Media Access Centre production, produced by Abigail Howkins and associate produced by Douglas Dougan. Developed and commissioned through the Digicult short film project, the film has been financed by the UK Film Council New Cinema Fund and the National Lottery through Scottish Screen and is executive produced on behalf of UKFC and GMAC by Paul Welsh (Edge City Films) and Caroline Cooper Charles (Lifesize Pictures).

Shot on Digital Betacam, Mono was filmed on location at the Fraser Suites (main apartment location) and The Bridge (bathroom location) in Glasgow, Scotland (UK) in February 2006.

The film was completed in April 2006.

Produced on a shoe-string budget, the production benefited from additional production support from Glasgow facilities house Hammerhead TV, independent production company Autonomi Ltd and the University of Strathclyde, as well as a very dedicated cast, crew and number of other individuals who donated time, effort and goods to the production.

The Cast

Samantha Young

Samantha Young studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and graduated in 2004. Since graduating she worked as part of Dundee Repertory Theatre ensemble in *Macbeth*, *A lie of the mind*, *The Visit* and *The Graduate*. She worked for Tag theatre in *A Taste of honey* and is currently playing Abigail in *The Crucible* with The National Theatre.

She has worked frequently for BBC Radio Scotland and recently finished playing Alison in *Don't Look Back in Anger* for BBC Radio 4.

Ainslie Henderson

Ainslie Henderson has been, among many other things, a musician and recording artist since leaving school. Having played in several different bands and by himself, he has performed gigs across the UK and America. He has been signed and recorded with a variety of record labels and has released a single that went to number five in the music charts. In 2003 he took part in BBC's Fame Academy, in which he came fourth. Ainslie has studied acting with the Impulse Company in London and the Edinburgh Acting School. He is currently finishing his third debut album and living in Edinburgh, *Mono* is Ainslie's first film.

Shakti Edwards

A trained dancer and choreographer, Shakti Edwards graduated from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in July 2006. In her time at the Academy, Shakti has performed in various productions including *Three Sisters*, *The Last Supper*, *The Comedy of Errors* and the title role in *Medea* and *Beowulf* with the Arches Theatre Company. She has also worked for BBC Scotland, as a voiceover artist and is currently playing Ruth in *Heritage*.

Directors Notes

By Richard Smith

THE FILM: THEME AND STORY

MONO is about communication and anonymity in the big city; the walls between us are thin but imposing. It's about the barriers between people; the barriers which we create. It plays with isolation and loneliness. It's about our need to overcome our own constraints in order to find happiness.

The story itself is simple. It's about two people – lonely in their separate ways – who find themselves communicating through the wall dividing their flats. It's sweet, quirky and uplifting.

ORIGINATION OF THE IDEA

The film is a butchered version of events in my own life! I've since discovered that my experiences are far from unique; people seem to sympathise easily with a situation in which neighbours are over-audible (clearly the world needs better insulation). In my case, as in MONO, the sounds ultimately brought me together with the girl next door...

DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTION OF THE FILM

I was clear about the sort of film I wanted to make for my first time directing; there was a particular scale, tone and narrative style that interested me. I wanted to find something simple, but rounded. The script was developed over a period of weeks, rarely flinching from its original purpose.

The visual movement of the film was quickly concrete in my mind. I was interested in extending the metaphor of the dividing wall to drive the shooting style (being that everything should derive from the central narrative). Simply, where the wall represents a barrier to our characters, the film is static and reserved, but as the wall becomes an opportunity and vehicle, the camera assumes greater fluidity and intimacy. The aural style (a crucial element) operates similarly, bringing the audience gradually closer to the sounds, and unifying them. It was important that the characters' change was supported subtly by the film in all ways.

MONO was somewhat an exercise in rhythm: two people out of synch with each other, trying to find a sense of harmony (which they ultimately achieve - metaphorically and literally). I wanted to accentuate this shift in movement, and push the tone of the film so we would get the greatest emotional reward at the end. Every element – performance, photography, sound, costume, make-up – had to work towards this.

I preached often that it was a film of 'moments'; we had to conquer the sweetness and connection felt by two people through a wall. It was a challenge, considering that the actors filmed separately and often without any sounds to react to. Rehearsals – and enormous natural talent – gave us a real chance. Samantha Young and Ainslie Henderson were real finds, and I'm sure will go on to do some special work.

In terms of photography and production design, there were numerous pitfalls to be avoided (not least of all that the two flats are actually the very same re-dressed room). The flats had to feel close together, but far apart – which is some brief! Production Designer Stephen Mason made the film credible, and Director of Photography Oliver Cheesman was simply a master craftsman throughout.

My job overall was made easy by a wealth of experience and commitment around me. The ability, creativity and hard work of the production department, cast and crew was humbling. I genuinely can't pass on enough credit.

We have high hopes now for MONO. It's life-affirming and universal. I hope it travels the world and breaks down communication barriers wherever it goes!

Enjoy!

Writer /Director Biography

Richard Smith

Since graduating with distinction in screenwriting from the University of Salford six years ago, Richard has been writing exclusively for film. His first feature script, psychological chiller *Trauma*, was directed by Marc Evans, starring Colin Firth and Mena Suvari. Produced by Warner Bros/Little Bird/BBC Films, it premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, and was selected for Edinburgh and Toronto. It opened on 175 UK cinema screens in August 2004. "Gripping thriller" (News of the World).

Richard's half-hour film, *Leonard*, won the award for Best Television Screenplay in the 2001-2002 BAFTA Scotland Awards. Other awards for *Leonard* include the Audience Award at the 2002 Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival, the Organization Prize at the 2002 Algarve Film Festival, the award for Best Single Drama at the 2002 Mental Health Media Awards and Best Fiction at the 2002 Tehran Festival for "the highly professional skills in driving the narrative and for its sense of humour in dealing with a human relationship..." A two-hander with Dennis Lawson and Stuart Wilkinson, directed by Brian Kelly, produced by Stella Maris Films/Scottish Media Group/Scottish Screen, it premiered at the Edinburgh International Film Festival in 2001.

Richard has recently completed the feature adaptation of *Leonard*; remake rights are secured by New York-based Kinetic Arts, supported by Crab Apple Films and Scottish Screen. He's currently writing the feature script, *Big Deal*, with Celador Films (based on the book by Anthony Holden) and true-life television film, *Auntie Rita*, with SMG, originated by himself.

A one-time stand-up comedian and Edinburgh Fringe Festival regular, with experience in producing/directing amateur theatre, *Mono* is Richard's film directing debut. He's represented by The Rod Hall Agency.

Producer Biography

Abigail Howkins

A graduate of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art with seven years theatre experience in production and performance at Dundee Repertory Theatre, Abigail has been working freelance in independent and broadcast film and television production for 6 years, across a variety of projects and roles from short films, corporate videos and promos to TV series and feature films (including *Sweet Sixteen*, *The Book Group*, *Jeopardy*, *Milk*, *The Choir*). In addition to industry work, Abigail has also worked in community media and film education, directing and producing a variety of community video projects and working as production consultant on student productions at RSAMD.

As a producer, Abigail's short drama credits include; *Wish* (written and directed by Rene Mohandas and funded by Cineworks and the London Production Fund) which premiered at Edinburgh Film Festival and won a number of festival awards as well as the Scottish BAFTA award for Best Short Film in 2002; *Manji*, a BBC Tartan Short (written and directed by Rene Mohandas); *Swansong*; a Dicult project for Film Council / Scottish Screen written by Joern Utkilen and directed by Nicholas Bone; and most recently, *Mono* (written and directed by Richard Smith). Abigail is currently developing longer form projects and feature films.

Full Crew List

Writer/ Director Richard Smith

Producer Abigail Howkins

Associate Producer Douglas Dougan

Production Manager Fiona Clark

Production Co-Ordinator Shirley Tulloch

Production Assistant Anna Purkis

Locations Manager Katrina Dee Inkster

Casting Victoria Beattie Casting

1st Assistant Director Amanda Black

3rd Assistant Directors Victoria Campbell
James Bolenbaugh

Script Supervisor Claire Mckay

Floor Runner Jacqueline Thornton

Dop Oliver Cheesman

Focus Puller James Harrison

Camera Assistant/Grip Adam Campbell

Sound Recordist Peter Brill

Boom Operator Thayna Mclaughlin

Gaffer Scott Napier

Lighting Technician Damian Leitch

Production Designer Stephen Mason

Art Director Kara Ramsay

Stand-By Art Director Amanda Currie

Props Master Mark Davitt

Costume Designer	Sophie Toulouze
Make-Up Designer	Wendy Kemp Forbes

Editor	Gordon Lockhart
Online Editor	Jim Allison
Sound Design	Douglas Mcdougall
Dubbing Mixer	Kahl Henderson

Stills Photographer	Jamie Simpson
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Executive Producers	Caroline Cooper Charles Paul Welsh
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Producer For GMAC	Karen O'Hare
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Short Film Executive For Scottish Screen	Julia Caithness
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Project Coordinator For UK Film Council	Paul Hewlett
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Full Cast List

Emily	Samantha Young
Jay	Ainslie Henderson
Linda	Shakti Edwards
Gary	Gerry Lynch
Neighbour	James Bolenbaugh
Noisy Boys	Greg Chapman William Dodds James Rhattigan
Party Couple	Rosemary James Mattieu Sagnet

Key Facilities

Camera & Grip Equipment: Hammerhead TV

Lighting Equipment: Lee Lighting

Online Editing: Jim Allison Editing

Audio Dub: Savalas Audio Post Production

Distribution & Exhibition

Mono is available on Digi-Beta, Beta SP and DVD

'MONO' CONTACTS

Production Company:

Glasgow Media Access Centre, 3rd Floor, 34 Albion Street, Glasgow G1 1LH

Tel: +44 (0) 141 553 2620

Fax: +44 (0) 141 553 2660

Producer:

Abigail Howkins

Tel: +44 (0) 7974 560 511

Writer/Director:

Richard Smith

c/o The Rod Hall Agency
6th Floor
Fairgate House
78 New Oxford St
London WC1A 1HB
info@rodhallagency.com
+44 (0) 207 079 7989

www.monothemovie.co.uk
mail@monothemovie.co.uk



