

PRESS NOTES



Written, Directed and Produced by NIARA MODI
Starring TARA NICODEMO JASON WEINBERG
With Yael LEON, ANUSREE ROY, ELISA MOOLECHERRY, LARA ARABIAN
Executive Producer PAUL SCHERZER Producers LAURA NORDIN, EMILY ANDREWS
Director of Photography KRIS BELCHEVSKI Production Designer MUN YING KWUN
Editor TIFFANY BEAUDIN Composer BILL PARSONS Costume Design KENDRA TERPENNING

Stir

Stir

Log Line: Secrets of family recipes are never written

Synopsis:

Mourning the death of her mother, Laila Mistry invites family for a traditional Indo-Persian feast. Instead of finding solace in the rituals of cooking, she has an identity crisis that threatens her marriage. Only the unraveling of a family secret restores harmony to her household.

Writer & Director: **NIARA MODI**

Producers: **NIARA MODI, LAURA NORDIN, EMILY ANDREWS**

Executive Producer: **PAUL SCHERZER**

Director of Photography: **KRIS BELCHEVSKI**

Production Designer: **MUN YING KWUN**

Editor: **TIFFANY BEAUDIN**

Composer: **BILL PARSONS**

Principle Cast: **TARA NICODEMO, JASON WEINBERG, Yael LEON & ANUSREE ROY**

12:04 | 2016 | Drama | COLOUR | 2:35 | SONY FS7 | 5.1 surround | DCP; Digital File

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Stir



Director's Statement

STIR is a personal project that draws on my experience as an immigrant in Canada and my heritage as a member of India's unique community of Zoroastrian Parsis.

Parsis love food and love life! STIR uses this essential aspect to explore identity and changing domestic roles, through the lens of food; specifically, the signature Parsi dish DHANSAK.

In STIR, Laila Mistry seeks comfort at a time of loss in domestic ritual. Since she is clueless in the kitchen, she is confronted with a chasm between her longing for connection and her inability to recreate what was once hers. A crisis of identity ensues ; A crisis leavened with humour and redeemed by love.

I wrote STIR soon after I became a wife and mother and began cooking daily. Prior to this, culinary misadventures had abounded; I had burnt lentils, cade rotis that were stiff like flying saucers and fled to Toronto's Bloor Street for take-out instead! But despite success in the kitchen, I was too intimidated to make DHANSAK. This lack of domestic courage provided fertile ground for STIR as I began to see DHANSAK as a living history of the Parsi people.. and that my failure to make it had layers of meaning for me.

The disconnect between our contemporary identities and those of our parents is universal, potent and ever present in all generations and particularly fraught in immigrant communities that juggle multiple identities.

STIR celebrates the creative tension of the immigrant experience along with the importance of keeping our identities alive and fluid.

Niara Modi

Stir

Writer, Director, Producer | NIARA MODI

Born and raised in Mumbai, India, Niara also lived in Italy and North Carolina before making Toronto her home.

In upcoming projects, Niara is slated to direct an India-set feature film, *BREACH CANDY* from her own screenplay, with Paul Scherzer of Toronto's Six Island Productions as producer. *BREACH CANDY* has been developed with support from Telefilm Canada and Corus Entertainment. *BREACH CANDY* was invited to India's Film Bazaar, Goa and the Toronto International Film Festival's International Financing Forum.

Niara's credits include co-writing, directing and producing the short, critically acclaimed, World War II drama *AFTER* which screened at film festivals internationally and was broadcast extensively in Canada.

Niara also directed *VARANASI TRAIL*, an alternative music video, for global rockers *Alms for Shanti*. Other select credits include work as videographer and sound recordist on the TV Documentary series *THE CREATORS* and *DOUBLETAKE*.

Niara is a graduate of the Vancouver Film School, McGill University and the United World College of The Adriatic (Italy). Niara has previously been one of the Reel World Film Festival's top emerging filmmakers.



Laila Mistry | TARA NICODEMO

Tara Nicodemo is a graduate of the Stella Adler Conservatory in New York City. She has since been acting on stage, in film and television across the country. A two-time Dora Mavor Moore Award nominee, Tara's most noteworthy projects include Hamlet directed By Graham McLaren, director of The Abbey Theatre, world premiere theatre productions such as The Watershed and the upcoming Five Faces for Evelyn Frost. Recently she acted in the film Mean Dreams premiering at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival.

Ben Kaplan | JASON WEINBERG

Since 1993 Jason has worked in TV, Film and Theatre in both Canada and the US. TV/Film highlights include: Series lead on HBO Canada's Good Dog and Good God; The Sopranos; Law and Order; Rookie Blue; Remedy; The Expanse; God and Country; Casino Jack; Red. Theatre Highlights include: Hamlet; Taming of the Shrew; Killers and other family; Angelique and Refuge.

Jay Kaplan | YAEL LEON

Yael Helena Leon is a Toronto actress. She comes from Israeli Jewish and Cuban roots. She is 15 years old and started out in the film and television business in commercials at the age of 2. She is an acting major at a school for the arts, volunteers at a children's theatre and has a general passion for the arts. She plays guitar, sings and writes songs, poetry and plays and has been experimenting with amateur film making since she could hold a camera.

Producer | LAURA NORDIN

Laura Nordin produces, directs, and acts. Currently based in Toronto, she is originally from Vancouver, BC. Nordin holds her BFA from UBC and her MFA from the joint program between Harvard's American Repertory Theatre Institute and the Moscow Art Theatre School. In 2010, she co-founded Filmcoop with Emily Andrews, a filmmaking collective dedicated to the collaborative development of inspired films. Select producing credits include: *CLEO (short-CFC-TIFF 2016)*, *Stir (short)*, *Morro & Jasp Do TV (TV Pilot)*, *Burning, Burning (feature – Raindance Film Festival 2015)*, *Bedtime Story (short – ReelHeArt Film Festival 2015)*, *OutsideIN (TV Pilot)*, *Come Here Go Away (short –Toronto Independent Film Festival 2011)*, and *The Package (short – Movieola 2009-2013)*. Upcoming: *The River You Step In (feature)*, *Piano Lessons (short)*, *Pond Life (feature)*. @lauranordin @filmcoopTO lauranordin.com filmcoop.to

Producer | EMILY ANDREWS

Emily Andrews is an actor and producer and a graduate of the London Academy of Dramatic Arts in the U.K. She has been involved in the film industry from her teen years when she acted in the TV series Wind At My Back (CBC) and her passion for being involved in production has never faded. She met Laura Nordin on a theatre production of Macbeth (CTP) and co-founded Filmcoop which has been producing a steady stream of independent projects: shorts, music videos and features films.

Stir

Emily has a number of projects currently in development but also remains active as an Actor. Some of her selected producing credits include: *CLEO (short-CFC, TIFF selection)*, *Burning, Burning (feature – Raindance Film Festival London, England)*, *The Cocksure Lads Movie (feature-CFF and Whistler)*, *Come Here Go Away (short –Toronto Independent Film Festival)*, Upcoming: *The River You Step In (feature-in post production)* @emilydandrews @filmcoopTO filmcoop.to

Executive Producer | PAUL SCHERZER

Founder and president of Six Island Productions, Paul Scherzer has produced a host of acclaimed international co-pro features like *COCONUT HERO (Canada/Germany)* and *CHALLAT OF TUNIS (Tunisia/France/Canada)*, as well as documentaries like *MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES* and *THE MANOR*, playing festivals from TIFF to Sundance, Cannes to Busan and selling into all markets.

Prior to founding Six Island, Paul worked for Telefilm and the NFB. He is a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre established by Norman Jewison, a TIFF STUDIO alumnus, and a member of the CMPA, ACCT and ACE.

Director of Photography | KRIS BELCHEVSKI

Kris is known for his cinematic and honest images. His recent feature film *JEAN OF THE JONESES* by writer/director Stella Meghie is having its Canadian premier at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival, after its American premiere at South by Southwest this past spring. Kris got a direct shout about his cinematography in a Variety article about the film. *DREDGER*, a short film he lensed for Philip Barker had its world premiere at TIFF last year and Kris was awarded the Best Short Film Cinematography Award at the Canadian Society of Cinematographers for his work on the project. Kris lensed the soon to be released feature film *COLD DECK*, starring Paul Sorvino, plus many iconic commercial campaigns, including the award winning DREAM campaign for Louis Vuitton and the Toronto Raptors WE THE NORTH spots. Kris is exclusively represented by SESLER, www.sesler.com.

Production Designer | MUN YING KWUN

Mun Ying Kwun is an Emmy nominated art director with a diverse slate of TV series, mini-series and feature films to her name, such as *NIKITA*, *COVERT AFFAIRS*, *THE DIVIDE* and *THE SECRET LIFE OF MARILYN MONROE*.

An architect by training, Mun Ying is known for building ambitious and complex sets. Her team created 127 sets for the mini-series *THE KENNEDY'S* and was acknowledged with a DIRECTORS GUILD of CANADA award for Production Design and an EMMY and GEMINI Nomination for Art Direction. Mun Ying's recent credits include the *DESIGNATED SURVIVOR* TV Pilot with Kiefer Sutherland (where a replica of the White House Oval Office was built), the pilot of *INCORPORATED* and current work on executive producer Frank Spotnitz's series *RANSOM*.

STIR is a fresh turn for Mun Ying as Production Designer and she looks forward to more.

Composer | BILL PARSONS

Bill Parsons composes, arranges, and performs an eclectic mix of jazz, classical, world, popular, improvised and experimental music. He plays electric & acoustic guitars, Sundanese gamelan, kacapi (20-string plucked zither), as well as glass instruments.

Bill has made numerous recordings as a leader and collaborator with **Mosaic, Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan**, Timar-Parsons (Sunda Duo), Glass Orchestra, Pirate Jenny Trio, Ferro Baci, and Ensemble Ulysse. Bill has also collaborated as composer with Montreal visual artist Chuck Samuels. Their most extensive work is **Movie/Music**.

Since 2010, Bill has been active as a film composer, as well as a producer of instructional videos for his work as a music teacher. Recent credits include: composer - *STIR* (2016) dramatic short by Niara Modi, composer – *COLD NIGHTS HOT SALSA* (2015) feature documentary by Edwin Gailits, arranger/performer for Jean Marc Larivière's documentary, *EFFRACTIONS* (2014). Bill was the arranger, performer, and producer for *Grammy Award Winners* (2015) guitar-instruction DVD.

Editor | TIFFANY BEAUDIN

Tiffany Beaudin is a Toronto based film and video editor. She has honed her craft on projects that excite and challenge audiences in both fiction and documentary film. Past works in fiction include the Genie nominated short film *Big Girl* directed by Renuka Jeyapalan, and the romantic feature *Tru Love* directed by Kate Johnston and Shauna Macdonald. In documentary film, Tiffany has edited pictures such as *David Steinberg: Quality Balls*, which was screened as a Hot Docs 2013 Special Presentation, and the Academy Award nominated documentary short *Claude Lanzmann: Spectres of the Shoah*, for which she also won a CCE award for Best Editing in Documentary - Short Form. Tiffany is a graduate of the prestigious Canadian Film Centre's Editors' Lab, 2004. She is currently editing Pat Mills' second feature, the coming-of-age comedy, *Don't Talk to Irene* featuring Academy Award winner, Geena Davis.