

PATAGONIA

Directed by Marc Evans

Synopsis

PATAGONIA narrates the journeys of two women – one looking for her past, the other for her future. The film intercuts between their stories, in which one of them travels south to north through the Welsh springtime and the other east to west through the Argentine autumn.

GWEN'S STORY

Gwen is Welsh, in her thirties, and she has been in a relationship with Rhys for seven years. They are a thoroughly modern urban Welsh couple living in Cardiff. He is a photographer, she an actress. On the surface they seem quite happy but for some time now they have been struggling to have a child and it's not happening. When Rhys is sent to Welsh Patagonia on a photographic project, Gwen decides to accompany him, hoping that for a while at least they can forget their woes and the ongoing strain of Gwen's inability to conceive. Patagonia, their imagined romantic place of dreams, will perhaps weave it's magic on them. Their guide through this vast landscape is a young Welsh Patagonian called Mateo, who, as well as being handsome, epitomizes the carefree spirit of the herdsman. Gwen falls for Mateo, and her dream trip with Rhys turns nightmarish as the couple separate in the middle of the desert. Each embarks on a personal journey, but ultimately – as their love for each other prevails – they are reunited in the beautiful foothills of the Andes. There they discover that the adventure of Patagonia is just escapism and that the real business of daily life cannot long be kept on hold. Whether they ever succeed in having a child we do not learn, but at the end of the film we feel sure that Gwen's future is with Rhys.

CERYS'S STORY

Cerys, an elderly diabetic Argentine who lives in the southern Andes, prepares to travel to Buenos Aires for a cataract operation. At least that's what her son and daughter-in-law are led to believe. The cagey old woman has another scheme in mind – a much longer and more intrepid journey to the north of Wales. A fading photograph provides the underlying reason for her plan. The picture is of a Welsh girl outside "Nant Briallu", a farm in the Welsh hills. The young woman, who turns out to have been pregnant, is Cerys' mother. As punishment for sinning out of wedlock – and in deep shame – she is sent to relatives in Patagonia, from whence she never returns to the land of her birth. Cerys' pilgrimage is an effort to solve the mystery of her own origin, for she has no idea who fathered her, and to find her mother's home. Accompanying Cerys is her somewhat neurotic nephew Alejandro, who, reluctant at first to go along with the old woman's madcap adventure,

ultimately finds that he enjoying the trip of a lifetime. At their journey's end Cerys is dying. She has made the poignant discovery that her mother's village has been lost for ever when, half a century earlier, the valley was flooded to create a reservoir. Alejandro, for his part, has fallen in love with a Welsh girl.

In contrast to Gwen's story of an uncertain future, Cerys' tale is of an unresolved past.

Director's Statement

“This is a film of big landscapes and intimate portraits. Wide shots of the two countries show the contrasts between them. The parched and withered Patagonian wilderness of autumn and the damp verdant hills of spring in Wales. The two landscapes reflect Cerys and Gwen's stories. Although the two women never meet, the camera brings them together through imagery including the parallels and connections between them. Gwen's journey toward an uncertain future and Cerys' quest to understand her unresolved past.”

History

In May 1865, the 447-ton *Mimosa* sailed from Liverpool to Argentina. On board were 163 Welsh men, women, and children who were fleeing the poverty of their hill farms and the low wages of the coalfields. They hoped to find a promised land where they could be free to speak their own language, exercise their own culture, and generally prosper.

Two months later they came ashore in Patagonia, a far-off territory barely claimed by any country and inhabited only by small tribes of nomadic Tehuelche. The Welsh faced a barren and inhospitable desert.

The colony endured years of hardship, starvation, and near failure. The settlers laboured to irrigate the land and eventually, with the help of the Tehuelche, they were able to conquer the surrounding desert.

The Welsh settlement survived and so too, to this day, did the dream they called Patagonia.

PRODUCTION STORY

In 2005 Welsh filmmakers producer Rebekah Gilbertson (*The Edge of Love*), director Marc Evans (*House of America*, *Snow Cake*) and the actress Nia Roberts (who also happens to be married to Evans) set off on a recce to Patagonia intending to do the research to make a historical epic.

“In Wales, we've all grown up with the Welsh/Patagonian myth,” explains Evans. “A lot of Welsh boys have got an obsession with Patagonia as it's a unique adventure in our history. The Americans have the wild west and the relationship between the Welsh gauchos and the indigenous Indians gives rise to a romantic mythology. We learn about the early settlers, but no one's quite sure where or what Patagonia is.”

Producer Rebekah Gilbertson explains how they originally set out to change these preconceptions. “We took a journey to Patagonia to follow in the footsteps of the first Welsh settlers. We set off from the east where the Welsh settled and travelled to The Andes in the west. On the way back Marc told us he had come up with a different idea – of an old woman travelling to Wales in search of her past and a young couple travelling to Patagonia in search of their future. We thought it was wonderful and so decided to make a contemporary road movie for romantics instead of the historical epic!”

Nia Roberts whose parents had taught Welsh in the Welsh colony in Patagonia had always wanted to make a film there. “Before I met Marc I had travelled to Patagonia many times as my sister lives there. A lot of people have made documentaries about the Welsh going there, but no one has ever made a film set there and so when I met Marc it was something we had talked about a lot.”

By serendipitous coincidence Welsh actor Matthew Rhys, who had previously worked with Rebekah (*The Edge of Love*), Marc (*House of America*) and Nia (in theatre), was also in Patagonia at the time of their recce. He was making a documentary about the establishment of the Welsh colony when 30 Welshmen (Los Rifleros) rode from the Atlantic in the east of the Chubut province to the foothills of the Andes in the west in search of fertile land. To commemorate 120 years since their expedition Matthew joined the great grandsons of the original settlers as they re-traced the route of their fore fathers. He spent a month with the Gaucho's on horseback, sleeping outside and washing in rivers, as they rode the 700km journey. Rhys remembers how his trip coincided

with the filmmakers' recce. "One day, truly in the middle of nowhere, I heard "Oy Matthew" and there were Marc, Nia and Rebekah who had tracked me down." Marc adds, "Matthew shares our interest and obsession with the place and we all wanted to work with him again so it was natural to involve him right from the beginning."

Once back in the UK Evans pitched the idea to screenwriter Laurence Coriat, another old friend and collaborator. She loved it and wanted to get involved. "Marc already had the set-up in place: the two parallel stories and the themes and ideas," says Coriat. "I liked the idea and rhythm of the two stories and the way they fed off each other. I don't necessarily write in a conventional way with a three-act structure, so this was interesting to me. I also love the genre of the road movie. I originally thought the Welsh part of the story would be harder to write, but it worked well from the beginning. Marc and I worked more together on the story of the young couple as there were always new ideas evolving and we talked a lot about the characters." Coriat also went on her own road trip. "I didn't know anything about the connection between Wales and Patagonia, so between drafts I went and did the trip that the young couple do and then I understood the connection much better afterwards."

Evans adds: "The story is not complicated. We wanted a feeling of freewheeling and the freedom of a road movie and to try and get the oxygen of the place in the film to allow us a bit of a leeway to be a little less conventional with the narrative. It's as much about travelling as arriving and I hope the journey is enjoyable."

With development money in place (from John Illsley, Celedor, Film Agency for Wales and Curzon Capitol) Gilbertson set about raising production finance. "With a film in four languages, Spanish, Welsh, Polish and English you have to be pretty determined to get it off the ground. It was a passion project for us and we were thinking outside the box the whole time to ensure we could make our dream."

There was no question that they would film in Welsh and Spanish, says Gilbertson. "When we first started talking about it Marc said we should do it in Welsh and we thought we should be true to the story. The Welsh left Wales in order to preserve their language, and hymnbooks and prayers which is why they went to Patagonia which they'd heard about from Darwin's voyage in the Beagle so they all paid these IOU's and got on a boat from Liverpool and sailed there with no idea what to expect and landed with absolutely nothing. So if you are making a film about the links between Wales and Patagonia it would be wrong not to do it in Welsh and Spanish."

Despite the many languages in the film, it does at heart have universal themes. “It’s a love story,” says Gilbertson. “An old lady’s love for her roots and a young couple finding out if they are meant to be together and they both go on journeys in different countries. That thing of looking for your past or future are both universal themes. The heart of the story does have a universal theme so it will touch people from all cultures and different parts of the world.”

Casting was straightforward as the Welsh actors were all people the director and producer already knew and had worked with, the Argentinean actors were discovered relatively easily while Evans and cinematographer Robbie Ryan were on a recce of the journey the characters eventually do. “I went back to Buenos Aires to meet the actors. I’d got my eye on Nahuel Perez Biscayart because I’d seen *Glue* that he’d been in and Laurence (Coriat) also knew him a little. I’d seen bits and pieces that Marta Lubos had done and so had cast them both in my head two years before getting the film up and running. That came together quite easily and so all the actors were in our heads when we were writing later drafts. And the magic element in shooting the film was that both sets of actors were in different countries and that galvanised everybody together.”

Matthew Rhys, who plays the local guide Mateo to troubled couple Gwen and Rhys, adds: “This film was everything I would ever want from a job; working with Marc again also having been there at its creation has a certain resonance and all the components that it holds are very dear to me. I have a great fascination for Patagonia and the Welsh story that goes with it so every element was in place for me as a passion project. The script description was an Argentinian James Dean and I thought brilliant, but what I liked about Matteo were the flaws behind the facade of the zippo lighter and the rugged jeans.”

Rhys particularly enjoyed working with Evans. “Marc is a complete filmmaker, he has every element of knowledge needed to make a film: he’s a great director with actors, understands light and pacing and music and how to move a camera and everything else so I learn an incredible amount from him and relish my time with him. He’s not a puppeteer as a director, he approaches the actor from the position of collaboration on the character which gives an actor a lot of confidence and he approaches a detailed path for the journey the character goes on.”

Nia, who plays Gwen one part of the Welsh couple, says about working with Matthew, “I’ve worked with Matthew on stage before and great to do this project with him because of our mutual connections with Patagonia and no one else could have played that part and tapped into that

Argentinian/Welsh thing like he does which he does seamlessly. The accent is very different in Welsh, he's a great energy on set and he's a very giving person in every way. It was really nice on this project to have people I already knew and had worked with, I'd also worked with Matthew Gravalle and Rhys Parry Jones, because it was such a fast turnover and we were in a different country so we had already done the bonding and could just get on with it.”

Nia was initially quite nervous about working with her husband. “ I've never really worked with Marc and also to have to pretend to be in love with someone else on screen was quite nerve-racking, but in the end it was very easy and relaxed. Being part of the project from the beginning really helped me to play the character of Gwen, and the writer knows me and so it was partly written for me so in a way it wasn't such a big departure for me. Marc's got such an amazing creative brain and he's very clear and articulate about what he wants. We spent three days before we started to shoot, discussing the characters and their dynamics so we knew exactly who they all were so we started from a good safe place. “

Welsh singer/song-writer Duffy makes her feature film debut in the film. Gilbertson explains how she became involved. “Duffy is a natural in her first acting role. It was almost as if it has always been to a part of her. It really lifts the story at that point,” says Gilbertson. “We met Duffy through Mark Robinson at Universal music who worked with me on *The Edge of Love*. She is a Welsh speaker like Marc and she really understood the character and the story and it moved her and said she would like to be involved and the part evolved around her. Marc said he thought she was really special and she's proved in the film that she really is. “

Evans adds: “Duffy is a discovery as an actress, she's great in the film. She was keen not to be 'Duffy the singer' in something. And we had a general conversation about what she might do, she's very busy as she's very successful and we thought it was far better for her to take a smaller part in something where the whole film doesn't rest on her being in it than to expose herself in something bigger. Welsh is her first language, but most of her lines are in Spanish, she can act and be herself on camera and I think we captured that girl from a small town in Wales, she plays a part that's quite similar to that. She does amazingly well and looks comfortable. The part was partly written for her, originally Laurence had called the part the girl with the strange look in her eyes. Duffy came on board early enough on that she was able to influence that part as I allowed all the actors to.”

Duffy explains why she wanted to be involved. “I've always had an interest in movies and I guess

the topic came up as people expressed an interest in my music videos and I got approached about doing a film and we were thinking about the options when Marc Evans got in touch. I was so busy I disregarded it but Marc wrote me a beautiful letter and I thought it through and thought it was a subject close to my heart and it was Welsh and about where I'm from so though I hadn't specifically decided to do a film at that time, the opportunity seemed too good to miss and after meeting with Marc I fell in love with the idea. “

Duffy plays Sissy who Alejandro meets on his trip to Wales with Cerys. “I feel as though Sissy's character was very close to who I used to be. I'm not saying I've changed dramatically, but there are elements of her that I think I've left behind so that's also what made me feel compelled to do the film. This little girl lost in time looking slightly out of place, I remember being that person. She resembled something that I had experienced growing up in Nefyn. I didn't look like anyone else I made my own clothes I cut and dyed my hair, I felt as if I was old fashioned and my friends were doing modern things I felt out of place and I felt Sissy had that too and I tried to elaborate on that when I played that character. I tried to find the truth within myself and how it resonates with me. I was sad to leave Sissy behind once we finished filming, it was hard to say goodbye to that person. It was like going home and getting to re-live something that I'd closed the book on. Even talking about it I get a little bit of heart ache, I can't explain it, it's the weirdest thing. It was really cathartic to play Sissy and did represent a story in my life.”

She adds “This project felt so enormous to me, because it was my debut. I don't know whether I'll do a film again, maybe this is it, but the experience was so truly enjoyable whether it was sitting with the director discussing things, whether it was being on screen, all the people that were part of the cast and crew, I took it very seriously it wasn't whimsical thing in my life. I was so busy at the time that to get a break to go back to Wales and re-visit some of the things I'd never said good bye to was really important.”

Duffy plays the ukulele and sings in the film. “I can't play an instrument, so I had to teach myself to play the ukulele. Music is part of our culture in Wales, we're very musical , so it didn't feel as if I was going back to my roots as a singer it just feels like a kid from Wales would be able to sing a hymn and play the ukulele, so I took that on. “

Duffy's scenes are all played with Argentine actor Nahuel Perez Biscayart, who plays Alejandro who accompanies Cerys on her trip to discover her past. “He is a really enigmatic character. He's a real star, there's something about him that you can't quite explain, there's a vulnerability and a

strength and you definitely know he's in the room," says Duffy. "He was really supportive, we're similar ages and both embarking on different things in our life so when we were going through the movie together we formed a great friendship. His acting approach is quite special, he's a young man with so much potential and he's quite aware of that and he's quite careful about what he does. He's a smart cookie. "

Evans adds "Nahuel does that thing that great actors do, he seems completely effortless and natural and has personality in his acting, but is technical as well. That's quite rare as actors are usually one or the other. They're either very analytical and have to think them self into the part and can't quite be in the moment, or they're very instinctual and can't watch rushes or think about it too much and I think he's both and he's got this extra element – a very individual face, I suppose you call it star quality. He's from the tradition of Jean Paul Belmondo or Serge Gainsbourg, European rebel actors, and he seems to embody that outsider element which is more interesting than being the hunk. He's got an edgy cerebral vibe. He and Marta were both very collaborative and it was a great pleasure working with them."

Perez Biscayart responded to the film's universal themes. "It's a multi lingual story, there is no nationality in the film. There are two stories mirroring each other but there is no communication between the two, that's what I find interesting about the film."

It also allowed him the opportunity to work again with Marta Lubos. "I've known Marta for some years and worked with her on *Silencio*, but here we got to know each other in more depth. I enjoyed working with Marta a great deal. We built a very grounded relationship and It's easy to act with her. "

He also enjoyed working with Marc Evans. "Marc was very open to have everyone's input in the scenes and always willing to listen to your potential changes. And he really enjoys watching you which is great to have in a director."

The film was shot over seven weeks. Filming took place over four weeks in Patagonia in April 09, followed by three weeks in May and June in Wales. Local crews were employed in each country, but with heads of department covering both shoots.

After the extraordinary landscapes of Patagonia, the filmmakers were worried that Wales might look like the poor relation.

Gilbertson explains. “The landscapes are so majestic in Patagonia, you go from the dust and the desert to the Andes and snow-capped mountains. We wanted Wales to look as impressive. I grew up in Snowdonia and we shot part of the film there and it is absolutely breathtaking. The dusty landscapes of Patagonia and the industrial towns of Wales going up to the mountains of the Andes and Snowdonia are both fantastic.”

For Evans the biggest challenge was not the filming, but how to put the two narratives together. “Basically we shot two films and hoped that they would come together. We did Argentina first and then Wales, so when we were filming Wales we were thinking quite a lot about the transitions between them, but at the end of the day I wanted them to feel like two short stories that collided but didn't always connect. Split narratives seem to be quite fashionable and particularly South American films for some reason. In the end we found a rhythm, we cut them separately so we found the essence of each narrative. We didn't cut to the script but to the films themselves, to follow the dynamic of the drama. It was an interesting way of working and technically interesting.”

Although she hadn't initially planned to, Duffy decided to record a song for the soundtrack.

“After the film we discussed if I was going to do the soundtrack,” she says. “And because the film felt so symbolic in many ways, it's about my country, the history of my country, about the language, a beautiful story, a great movie maker, a great cinematographer there were so many things about it that I enjoyed I didn't want to bring anything that was about me, I was just honoured to be a part of it. But I was so engrained in it that it seemed natural and one day a song came on the radio and I knew I wanted to translate it into Spanish and record it for the soundtrack. It's “I Hope there's Someone” by Antony Hegarty. It's an epic song without really going anywhere and it really has the ability to grab you by the throat. When I listened to the words “I hope there's someone to take care of me when I die, when I go” I thought so much of the film is about life, questioning about where we're going to go and who we're going to go with, where we're going to end up and who we're going to be and where we're going to be it. And I thought the song is so poignant.”

Evans adds. “We wanted Duffy to choose songs for herself to sing on the soundtrack that would be inspired by the film rather than descriptive of it, and we all agreed that one in Spanish and one in Welsh would be interesting. The choice of a Welsh song seemed obvious to her and us: “Ar Lan Y Môr” (“Down By The Sea”), is the love song that she sings in the film, although Duffy brought her own spin to it. She wanted an Elvis and The Jordanaires type arrangement,

quite retro in feel...As for the Spanish song she chose a beautiful Antony and The Johnsons track ("I Hope There's Smeone") which the writer (Antony Hegarty) allowed us to translate as "Desearia". Duffy's version is both familiar and extraordinary and reminds me of that "Llorando" moment in "Mulholland Drive". When a familiar song is transposed into Spanish something magical seems to happen, it seems to gain intensity, especially if you have Miss Duffy singing it with all the passion of a broken-hearted lover...both tracks are really special recordings that will hopefully last in their own right."

Evans found making a film about Wales enlightening. "I relished looking at my country from the outside. Familiarity breeds if not contempt then a slight taking for granted. There's a folksiness to how people in Wales talk about themselves that I shy away from and I had to look at it from the point of view of these two newly arrived Argentinians who didn't know their way around. To a Welsh-Patagonian the country's got the same mythology about it that Patagonia had for a Welshman and to arrive here and initially find it's kind of mundane and prosaic and as they work their way north the country opens up. There's a Wales that emerges more by accident than on purpose, which is to do with where Wales is economically, so I loved this idea of the teepee campsite around the reservoir and the lost village. This is why the Welsh language survives, because the country adapts. It's a cliché, but I fell in love with Wales again, through seeing it through the eyes of others.

Gilbertson adds. "To show Wales has a cinematic voice that travels internationally was what we set out to do."

Matthew Rhys adds, "Getting Welsh stories out on international platforms is enormously important and certainly a reason I'd sign up for similar projects. I didn't grow up with any Welsh films and hopefully we can go some way to rectifying that for future generations."

Patagonia is a S4C & THE FILM AGENCY FOR WALES presentation
in association with THE WALES CREATIVE IP FUND & JC TRUST
GLOBE PRODUCTIONS PEPPER POST & GRENVILLE THOMAS
a RAINY DAY FILMS / BOOM FILMS production

in association with RED RUM FILMS.

CAST

MATTHEW RHYS - Mateo

Matthew was born in the historic city of Cardiff in South Wales. At primary and secondary school he was educated in the Welsh language, which remains his first language.

At seventeen, having playing the lead role of Elvis in a school musical Matthew decided to apply for drama college and was accepted at the prestigious Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. Upon his acceptance by RADA, the college forwarded him to apply for the Patricia Rothermere Scholarship adjudicated by Sir Richard Eyre and Dame Diana Rigg. To his great surprise and joy he won and was presented with the scholarship at the 1993 Evening Standard Awards.

During his third year at RADA, Matthew auditioned for Marc Evans' *House Of America* (with Sian Phillips and Steven Macintosh) and landed the part of Boyo, the son of a dysfunctional family living in the South Wales Valleys. Afterwards he returned to finish his course at RADA - to leave again to appear in "Back-Up," the BBC police series about the operational support units also known as Hooli Vans. After three months filming in Birmingham in and out of police vans, Matthew was pleased to have the chance to return to Cardiff and act in his own language in the Welsh film *Bydd yn Wrol* (Be Brave) - for which he subsequently won Best Actor at the Welsh Bafta's.

A year of theatre followed for Matthew when he went to the National Theatre in London to act in Peter Gill's controversial play *Cardiff East*. It transferred to Cardiff for a short while, which Matthew found a little daunting – having to play to old school friends wearing nothing but a smile and a bad haircut was something of a challenge!

After five months at the National he moved round the corner to the Old Vic theatre with Geraldine McEwan, under the direction of Dominic Dromgoole. The play *Grace Note* ran as part of the new writing initiative under Peter Hall. Three months at the Royal Court ensued as part of the International Writers Festival and Matthew appeared in two of the three adaptations featured.

In January of '98 Matthew went to New Zealand for four and a half months to star in *Green Stone*, a colonial costume drama for television where he had "one of the best experiences of his life".

Flying back from New Zealand, he stopped over in Los Angeles to audition for Julie Taymor's critically acclaimed adaptation of *Titus* and was thrilled to be offered the role of Demetrius. He was immediately flown to Rome to start filming the Shakespearean tragedy, which starred Anthony Hopkins and Jessica Lange. On being given the chance to work with Hopkins, Matthew said, "it was better than Wales winning the Triple Crown!"

Returning from Rome in the early part of '99, Matthew then travelled to Sheffield to play Tom Courtenay and Lulu's son, Ray for a part in Peter Hewitt's quirky film comedy – *Whatever Happened To Harold Smith?* released in March 2000.

Matthew then returned to Wales to do two consecutive films with Jonathan Price. The first was *The Testimony Of Taliesin Jones*, a film to be released later this year in which Matthew plays the elder son of a difficult, single parent family. He then went straight onto Sara Sugarman's comedy – *Very Annie Mary*, (released in March 2001), in which he played Nob, one of two gay local shop-owners alongside flatmate, Ioan Gruffudd who plays Hob.

In 2000 he starred in the lead role in *Metropolis* a drama series for Granada (which went out in May 2000), about the lives of six twenty-somethings living in London; and *Peaches*, the feature film of the celebrated play written and directed by Nick Grosso. Set in London, Matthew played the lead role of Frank, a discontented and disgruntled student in his final year, which was released in the UK in October 2001.

Matthew received huge critical acclaim when he starred as Benjamin in the world premiere of the stage adaptation of *The Graduate* alongside Kathleen Turner - which opened in April 2000 at the Gielgud Theatre in London's West End. Kathleen said of Matthew "He can really act. With acting it's like dancing where one leads and the other follows and then they change over. Well he can dance!"

After six months in the West End, Matthew flew to Dublin to film the lead role of Strang in and 17th century swashbuckling adventure *The Abduction Club*. The film is based on a true Irish tradition of gentlemen kidnapping potential wives for 24 hours in order to get to know each other and fall in love. This British film also stars Daniel Lapaine as Strang's partner in crime. The film is released in July 2002.

Matthew returned to take the lead role of Darren Daniels in *Tabloid*. This film charts the rise and fall of a maniacal television chat show host who will stop at nothing to “out” celebrity secrets to achieve ratings for his No. 1 show. Also starring Mary Elisabeth Mastrantonio and John Hurt.

The start of 2001 took Matthew to New Zealand to shoot the epic drama, *Lost World* for the BBC. He starred alongside Bob Hoskins and James Fox in an adventure recreating Conan Doyle’s tale of British explorers searching for an undiscovered plateau inhabited by prehistoric beasts. The drama primed as “the jewel in the BBC’s Christmas crown” was shown over Christmas day and Boxing Day.

Matthew shot an independent horror film, *Deathwatch*. in Prague in the last few months of 2001. Matthew plays the platoon doctor in a grim tale of the daily fight for survival in the trenches of the Second World War. As the plot unfolds it becomes obvious that a more threatening force than the enemy is afoot.

2002 saw Matthew return to the National to perform a three-hander called *The Associate*. Directed by Paul Miller and written by the talented Simon Bent. Matthew and Nick Tennant played council-employed decorators who discover there is more to their seemingly guileless pensioner client than meets the eye.

Matthew completed filming on the feature film *Fakers* in London alongside Kate Ashfield in 2002. His next role took him to Lithuania for the TV series *P.O.W.* A return to the stage saw him take the part of first voice in *Under Milk Wood*, which showcased at the Swansea Grand Theatre, commemorating 50 years since the death of Dylan Thomas.

Matthew then went to the Royal Shakespeare Company for 18 months where he played Romeo and Edmund (King Lear) for eighteen months to great critical acclaim, playing in both Stratford-Upon-Avon and London.

2005 saw him back in front of the camera in two feature films – *Virgin Territories* shot entirely on location in Italy with Tim Roth and Hayden Christensen. Back then to London for a romantic comedy *Love and Other Disasters*, with Brittany Murphy and Catherine Tate.

The end of 2005 saw Matthew undertake his proudest achievement to date – an expedition on horseback across Southern Argentina, which he made into a documentary. In the Nineteenth

century, hundreds of Welsh men and women colonised in Patagonia and the language is still spoken there today. During the establishment of the colony, 30 Welsh men rode from the Atlantic to the foothills of the Andes in search of fertile land. To commemorate 120 years since their achievement Matthew joined the great grandsons of the original expedition as they re-traced the exact route of their fore fathers. He spent a month with the Gaucho's on horseback, sleeping out and washing in rivers as they rode the 700km journey. Prior to the trip he trained in camera technique and observational documentary making, the result of which was shown on BBC Wales.

2006 saw him return to the US to shoot television series '*Brothers and Sisters*' in which he plays Kevin, one of the troubled siblings, in the one hour weekly drama for the ABC network. Matthew has received so much praise for his America accent – no one now believes he is actually Welsh and also for his portrayal of this very modern gay character. Fellow cast members include Sally Field, Calista Flockhart and Rachel Griffiths. It's currently in it's fifth series.

Matthew most recently starred in *The Edge of Love* (2008), in which he plays Dylan Thomas, a charismatic poet who finds himself loved by both Caitlin (Sienna Miller) and Vera (Keira Knightley). The film was directed John Maybury, written by Sharman Macdonald and produced by Rebekah Gilbertson. Matthew was nominated for a Best Actor award at the Welsh BAFTA's in 2009 for his role.

MARTA LUBOS – Cerys

Marta Lubos is a well-known theatre and television actress in her native Argentina.

On film she appeared in the award-winning *The Motorcycle Diaries*, directed by Walter Salles as well as playing Mirta in *The Holy Girl*, directed by Lucrecia Martel. Both films played in competition at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival. She has previously co-starred with Nahuel Perez Biscayart in *Silencio*, directed by Meme Garcia Guevara. Other feature films include *Night Hunter* directed by Gerardo Herrero and *The Past*, directed by Hector Babenco.

NAHUEL PEREZ BISCAYART – Alejandro

Argentinian actor Nahuel has appeared in a wide range of theatre, television and film. His career began in 2003 when he appeared in the popular miniseries "Disputas" and "Sol Negro", before making his feature film debt in Nicolas Tuozzo's *Proxima Salida*. He has worked continuously, coming to international attention through roles in Fabian Bielinsky's *El Aura*, which premiered at

the Sundance Film Festival in 2004, and his lead role in Alexis dos Santos' *Glue* which followed in 2005.

Continuing to work in television and theatre he notably starred in the music video for Robbie Williams' "The 80's" in 2007 and in theatre starred in Jean Cocteau's "Les Parents Terrible," and in 2008 in "I am Jerome Bell" with Elizabeth Le Compte's Wooster Group. He co-starred with Marta Lubos in *Silencios* and most recently starred in *Hypnose*, directed by Benoit Jacquot .

NIA ROBERTS - Gwen

The youngest of three girls, Roberts was born and brought up in Brecon, Powys. Her first language is Welsh, and she attended Brecon's Welsh-medium primary school Ysgol-y-Bannau from 1975 to 1983. Her family were active members of the Brecon Little Theatre amateur dramatics group, and aged seven she first trood the boards. Four years later, she landed her first television role as the lead girl in "The Farm", a 30-minute "Jackanory" play for BBC 1, joined the National Youth Theatre of Wales. She then studied acting at Birmingham University.

Her big break came in 1998 when she was cast in the Paul Morrison directed *Solomon a Gaenor*, opposite Ioan Gruffudd. With dialogue in Welsh and Yiddish, it was nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards in 2000.

Her subsequent Welsh-language credits included: *Fondue*, *Rhyw a Deinosors!*, *Dr Terribles House of Horrible*, *Border Café*, *Newes of the Weeke*, *Y Palmant Aur*, *Glan Hafren*, *Pobl y Cwm*. She recently played Kirsti O'Shea in S4C's *Sopranos-by-the-sea*, "Y Pris," alongside Matthew Gravelle.

In 2009, she starred as Registrar Mary Finch in the BBC Wales commissioned, produced hospital drama "Crash", produced by Tony Jordan.

MATTHEW GRAVELLE - Rhys

Matthew is a familiar face from numerous television roles including the popular series "Hearts and Bones," "Holby City," "Torchwood," "Casualty" and "Love Soup". He notably played Chaplain in Granada television's BAFTA winning "Mark of Cain," directed by Marc Munden and written by Tony Marchant. He had a small role in Marc Evan's' "Collision," and was recently nominated for Best Actor at the Welsh BAFTA's in 2007 for his lead role in "Y Pris," the popular tv show billed as "Soprano's by-the-sea", in which Nia Roberts also stars.

Patagonia is his feature film debut.

RHYS PARRY JONES - Martin

Welsh actor Rhys Parry Jones is most famous for his role in the S4C children's series "Plismon Puw." Rhys has also featured in episodes of "Eastenders," "Casualty," and the Welsh drama "Ypris, with co-stars Matthew Gravelle and Nia Roberts.

Based in Cardiff, Rhys has recently completed filming on *Ironclad*, starring Paul Giamatti and Brian Cox.

DUFFY - Sissy

Duffy was born and spent her childhood years in the north Wales coastal community of Nefyn, a place too remote to be driven by style wars or opposing music factions (the nearest record counter was a bus ride away and only stocked the Top 40). The upbringing she describes is one in which everyone had to rub along together, making do and mending, accepting each other and their tastes without prejudice.

Having no CD collection of her own, her first real musical memory is of walking into the kitchen unannounced to find her mother and stepfather dancing to Rod Stewart. The first steps she took towards defining her own personal identity came when she borrowed one of her dad's VHS tapes of the '60s TV show 'Ready, Steady, Go!'. "It had The Beatles, the Stones, the Walker Brothers, Sandie Shaw and Millie singing 'My Boy Lollipop'. So sexy and exciting! I played it again and again until finally it disintegrated."

Says former Suede guitarist and record producer Bernard Butler of this artlessness, "Duffy managed to grow up without any concept of what was cool or current, what she should or shouldn't like, how to behave or even how to sing. For her, coming to London at all was the stuff of fairytales."

"And to come here to write songs with some random bloke who'd been recommended to her, me? It meant taking two buses and then two trains and took all day. Then she'd do the same in reverse to get home, playing the music she'd just made to old ladies she encountered on the journey. It's hard for cynical music industry types to get their heads around just how far removed she was from our world, geographically and in every other way. But what you've got as a result is someone who acts and sings completely and unselfconsciously from the heart. That's a rare and magical thing."

Butler was introduced to Duffy by Rough Trade's Jeannette Lee who, in August 2004 and after hearing demos recorded in this or that mate's home, became the singer's mentor and manager. For Duffy, to have not just a friend but also point of both safety and reference in the strange new world she found herself in was crucial to her own musical development and sense of self.

"People keep saying to me, 'You've made a great record' but I can't take that in because I didn't do it on my own. Jeannette and I made 'Rockferry' together and she's been with me every step of the way, broadening my horizons, introducing me to people I can trust." Butler was just one of them: having written the glorious, chorus-free, utterly hypnotic 'Rockferry' together at the beginning of the project, they then worked on a further three of the ten tracks on what is already being talked about as 2008's most important debut release. Jimmy Hogarth & Steve Booker are the other collaborators on this classic-in-waiting.

What can you expect to hear? The title track and album opener, as atmospheric, slow-building and idiosyncratic song as you could hope for, leads into a collection of original material that some might call retro in feel but which Duffy herself prefers to identify as classic. You'll find arrangements as sparsely effective as those against which Dionne Warwick told her Bacharach & David-wrought tales of heartbreak in the early 1960s. You'll find lush choruses and swooning hooks (as perfected by the late Miss Springfield and various distinguished others). But this is far from pastiche.

What you'll find instead is irrefutable evidence of a significant new talent, and one that has developed in splendid isolation, not in reaction to market forces or the input of focus groups and industry experts. Duffy is the real, unspoiled original deal. "People keep asking me where my voice comes from and the fact is I don't know," says the brightest new star of 2008. "Why are your eyes the colour they are? It's no answer at all but it's the only one I have."

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Her 2008 debut album ['Rockferry'](#) entered the UK Album Chart at number one. It was the best selling album in the United Kingdom in 2008, with 1.68 million copies sold. The album was certified several times Platinum and has sold over 5 million copies worldwide, spawning the hits "Mercy" and "Warwick Avenue". With "Mercy", Duffy became the first Welsh female in 25 years to achieve number-one on the UK Singles Chart. In 2009, she won the Grammy Award for Best Pop Vocal Album for 'Rockferry,' and she was nominated for two other Grammy awards. She also won 3 Brit Awards including Best Album and an Ivor Novello for "Mercy".

CREW

MARC EVANS – DIRECTOR

Evans was born in 1959 in Carmarthen, Wales. He studied history of art at Cambridge University which he followed with a course in film at Bristol University.

Evans started directing TV drama, then made his feature film debut in 1997's with *House of America* about a young Welsh immigrant to the United States who falls foul of the American dream. The film starred Matthew Rhys and won 4 Welsh BAFTA's including best director for Evans. In 1998 came controversy with *Resurrection Man*, a thriller set amid sectarian violence in Northern Ireland.

He followed this with the “Big Brother” inspired horror film *My Little Eye* which was followed in 2004 by *Trauma* starring Colin Firth and Mena Suvari, a chilling psychological study of amnesia and despair.

Evans's 2006 film *Snow Cake* starred Sigourney Weaver and Alan Rickman and premiered in competition at the Berlin Film Festival.. His documentary *In Prison My Whole Life*, about death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal was selected for the Sundance Film Festival in 2008.

He most recently directed the five-part ITV drama “Collision”, the story of a group of strangers whose lives intertwine following a devastating car crash.

REBEKAH GILBERTSON – PRODUCER

Following a Fine Arts degree at the Falmouth School of Art and Design, Rebekah completed the MA in Film Production at the National Film and Television School, where she produced a number of short films.

At the school, Rebekah began work on her first feature film production *The Edge of Love*. The story was inspired by her grandparents relationship with Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. The script was written by Sharman Macdonald, directed by John Maybury, and starred Keira Knightley, Cillian Murphy, Sienna Miller and Matthew Rhys. The film was released in June 2008. Rebekah received the Women in Film Talkback Thames New Talent Award in December 2008. In 2009, Rebekah completed the Inside Pictures programme and was appointed to the board of Film Agency Wales. The last year has also seen the growth of Rainy Day Films as she has joined forces with producer Nicole Carmen-Davis. Together they have established a fund to enable them to develop films in-house and are currently packaging their next feature.

LAURENCE CORIAT - Writer

Laurence Coriat was born in France and moved to London in her early twenties. She wrote Michael Winterbottom's *Wonderland* which was selected in competition at Cannes in 1999 and won the best British Independent Film award that year. She co-wrote Sandra Goldbacher's *Me Without You*, starring Michelle Williams and Anna Friel, which was unveiled at the Venice Film Festival in 2001.

She went on to collaborate with Michael Winterbottom in 2006 on *A Mighty Heart* an adaptation of Marianne Pearl's account of her husband's kidnapping and murder "A Mighty Heart: The Daniel Pearl story". The film starred Angelina Jolie who received a Golden Globe nomination for her portrayal of Marianne Pearl. She co-wrote Winterbottom's most recent release *Genova*, which starred Colin Firth as a man struggling to cope with the death of his wife.

She is currently collaborating with Winterbottom on the television drama "Seven Days", which charts the relationship between a man, imprisoned for drug smuggling, and his wife and is being shot over the course of five years, a few weeks at a time.

She has written and directed three short films: *Being Bad*, *Holiday* and most recently *New Love*. She is currently developing two feature film screenplays which she hopes to direct.

ROBBIE RYAN - Director of Photography

Robbie Ryan served as the DP on Arnold's first feature *Red Road* as well as her Academy Award winning short film *Wasp*. He recently worked with her on her critically acclaimed *Fish Tank*, which screened in competition at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival. He was nominated for a BIFA for Best Technical achievement for his cinematography.

His other film credits include Bille Eltringham's *This is not a Love Song*, Sarah Gavron's *Brick Lane* and most recently *The Scouting Book for Boys*, directed by Tom Harper.

He has also shot numerous commercials and has worked on music videos for a huge range of artists including Leona Lewis, Amy Winehouse, Kasabian, Super Furry Animals, Ms Dynamite,

Goldfrapp, Stereophonics, Girls Aloud, British Rebel Motorcycle Club, Massive Attack, The Streets and Jarvis Cocker.

MARIE LANNA – Production Designer / Costume Designer

Marie Lanna cut her teeth designing numerous short films before working as stand-by art director on Tom Harper's *Scouting Book for Boys*. She has subsequently worked on *The Symmetry of Love* and the South American set *Carmo*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2009.

She makes her debut as costume designer on *Patagonia*.

MALI EVANS – Editor

Evans has worked extensively in the television industry across drama and documentary genres. In documentary he has worked with director Colin Thomas on numerous occasions, including “Blood and Belonging,” presented by Michael Ignatieff, “Excalibur – The Search for Arthur,” “Redcoats and Rebels” and “Cartoonists on the Frontline – Steve Bell”. In drama he edited the Welsh BAFTA winning “Lois” in 1998, followed by “Yr Aduniad” for which he was nominated for a Welsh BAFTA. In 2000 came *Labrats*, directed by Paul Brannigan and between 2001 and 2006 he worked on the series “Tipyn O Stad”.

JOSEPH LODUCA - Composer

By the age of 15, LoDuca was warming up rock legends Bob Seger, Ted Nugent, and the MC5 in smoky Detroit clubs and sneaking into Jeff Beck concerts. He was hooked.

Onward to formal training in jazz and classical music, at the University of Michigan and in New York City. He plugged into the jazz culture. Submerged himself in music from around the world. Performed at jazz festivals in Europe. Was asked to tour with major recording artists, but he preferred composing - it let him run freely among the disciplines without getting caught.

And then one day a director friend said, “you know, you’d be good at scoring films.” Since taking that suggestion, he was awarded a couple of Prime Time Emmys, ten nominations, numerous ASCAP awards, and was named “Horror Film Composer of the Year.”

His credits include the César nominated score for the French film *Brotherhood of the Wolf*, numerous American and European feature films, the worldwide syndicated television series “Xena: Warrior Princess” and “The Librarian” series of telefilms.

The score to *Patagonia* included song collaborations with Duffy, Bryn Terfel and Angelo Badalamenti. He is currently scoring television series “Legend of the Seeker” for Disney, “Leverage” for TNT, and “Spartacus:Blood and Sand” for Starz Entertainment.