



# Truant



*Most days Evan rides the bus all day, but one day he gets off...*

## PRESSKIT

I N T E R N A T I O N A L   S A L E S

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**N E W   Z E A L A N D   F I L M**

## Essential Information

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Writer	Heather Menzies
Director	Michael Duignan
Producer	Rachel Gardner
Production Company	Maxim Films
Technical Information	35mm/ Anamorphic / 1:2.35 / Dolby SR
Running Time	15 minutes including titles
Country of Production	New Zealand
Date of completion	March 2005
Genre	Drama
Sales	Juliette Veber, New Zealand Film Commission Email: juliette@nzfilm.co.nz Tel: +64 4 382 7686

## Log Line

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*Most days Evan rides the bus all day, but one day he gets off...*

## Short Synopsis

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Evan rides the bus all day instead of going to school. But when he gets off to follow Romy, she teaches him a lesson about life.

## Long Synopsis

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Most days Evan rides the bus all over town rather than face another day at school. He feels at home by himself, lost in his thoughts and drawings, watching the city roll past the window. But one wet day he notices a slightly older, beautiful girl steal a wallet before jumping off the bus. Romy seems like the embodiment of everything he daydreams about: excitement, rebellion and sex. He is instantly fascinated and ends up following her. A tentative friendship emerges as they journey across the hinterland of the city, killing time and having fun. Evan thinks he has found a companion that understands him, but he soon learns that he doesn't understand Romy at all.

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## **Festival Awards**

2007 Best Short Film Category – 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Silver Lake Film Festival, USA

## **Festival Screenings**

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2005 Homegrown Film Festival, New Zealand

2005 The New Zealand Film Festival, New Zealand

2005 43<sup>rd</sup> New York Film Festival, USA

2005 Seagate Foyle Film Festival, Ireland

2006 36<sup>th</sup> Tampere International Short Film Festival, Finland

2006 Richmond Road Film Festival, New Zealand

2006 Capalbio Cinema International Short Film Festival, Italy

2006 Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia

2006 Message to Man International Documentary, Short and Animated Film  
Festival, St Petersburg, Russia

2006 50<sup>th</sup> BFI London Film Festival, UK

2006 Exground Film Festival, Germany

2007 Silver Lake Film Festival, USA

2007 29<sup>th</sup> International Competition - Festival du Court Metrage Clermont  
Ferrand, France

2007 Minimalen Short Film Festival – International Panorama, Norway

2007 Giffoni Film Festival, Italy

2007 Antipodes St Tropez Film Festival, France

## **Director's Notes**

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When you're young you can make and lose friends very quickly; usually because you're still figuring out who you are yourself and how you fit in the world. "Truant" is an unrequited love story between two lonely young people. It is about the things we learn that make us adults; Evan may be skipping school, but he is being taught a life lesson. By the end of the story he might have been hurt, but he knows more about himself and the world, and in an emotional sense has grown older.

As Heather Menzies developed the script, I felt as though it was in fact an archetypal story, and that similar episodes could have occurred in many people's adolescence. With this in mind I wanted to approach the production of "Truant" as though it were a memory of the events, rather than the events themselves. When I remember stories in my life they come to me in a jumble – snatches of images and words and sounds that I piece together in my mind to try to make sense of. I hoped to mimic this feeling of remembering in the way we put the film together.

I was lucky enough to work with talented people such as Aaron Morton (DOP), Jonno Woodford-Robinson (editor), and Tim Prebble (sound), all of whom embraced this approach and added to it. I was also extremely blessed to find Shanti and Emlyn so quickly in casting; they stood out a hundred miles, and from the first rehearsal it was just a question of helping them to make the characters their own. Kylie Burtland put in many after hours work to get the score done, and managed to capture the bittersweet mood of the film perfectly. Thanks to my producer Rachel Gardner, and everyone else who worked on the film, I hope you enjoy it.

Michael Duignan

## **Director's Bio: Michael Duignan**

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Michael Duignan was born in Wellington in 1977 and has been involved in the film industry for the last ten years. He worked at the now famous Embassy theatre in Wellington while studying Film and Philosophy at Victoria University. In 2001 he directed his first theatrical short film "A New Way Home" which was accepted into the Melbourne Film Festival, and won several awards in the Drifting Clouds Film Festival. That same year was accepted in to the MA program at the Australian Film, Television and Radio school in Sydney. He graduated in 2002 and since then has divided his time between Sydney and Auckland directing television commercials and developing future projects.

## **Production Company: Maxim Films**

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Maxim Films was set up in 2003 to develop and produce New Zealand films for a global audience. Maxim Films is committed to telling New Zealand stories with global themes and working with New Zealand film makers capable of making their mark on the international stage.

## **Producer: Rachel Gardner**

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After ten years in London studying and working in print and visual media, Rachel Gardner returned to New Zealand two years ago to focus on a career in film and television production and in developing the careers of New Zealand film directors and script writers through her agency Rachel Gardner Management ([www.rachelgardner.co.nz](http://www.rachelgardner.co.nz)). In the last two years she wrote and associate produced an award winning feature-length documentary on the New Zealand artist Colin McCahon "Colin McCahon: I AM", produced two series of the top rating prime time factual series "The Lion Man" and the short film "Truant", as well as managing the careers of some of New Zealand's top directors (Hamish Rothwell, Glenn Standring, Peter Burger, Brendan Donovan) and writers (Nick Ward, Duncan Sarkies, Kathryn Akuhata-Brown, Rebecca Hobbs). She has recently received NZFC funding for a second short film "Fog" to be directed by Peter Salmon.

Rachel's co-owns her film production company Maxim Films with producer Angela Littlejohn. Together they have several feature film and documentary projects in various stages of development with the NZFC and TVNZ. Rachel has a BSc (Hons) in History and Medical Sciences from University College London (Deans List) and an MSc in Policy, Law and Economics from the London School of Economics.

## **KEY CREW**

Written by	HEATHER MENZIES
Directed by	MICHAEL DUIGNAN
Produced by	RACHEL GARDNER
Executive Producers	ANGELA LITTLEJOHN/ KARL ZOHRAB
Director of Photography	AARON MORTON
Sound Designer	TIM PREBBLE
Music Composer	KYLIE BURTLAND
Editor	JONATHAN WOODFORD-ROBINSON

## **CAST**

Romy	SHANTI WEBBY
Evan	EMLYN WILLIAMS
Shop Assistant	LYNN MAYALL
Bus Driver	BRIAN MCDONALD
Wallet lady	PAMELA DEACON
Lady on the bus 1	JOYCE HARPER
Lady on the bus 2	MARY HALL
Girl on bus	SHANEZ AKHTAR
Man on bus 1	SIMON SYLAND
Man on bus 2	KEITH MACY
Man on bus 3	WARIK BLAKE
Young mother with baby	STEPHANIE HILL
Baby on bus	ARCH GARDNER

## CREW

Casting

Catch Casting

First Assistant Director  
Production Manager  
Art Director  
Sound Recordist  
Gaffer  
Key Grip

Hamish McFarlane  
Paddy Compter  
Zac Beecroft  
Aaron Davis  
Martin Waugh  
Gareth Robinson

Production Consultant  
Production Coordinator  
Production Assistant

Alex Cole-Baker  
Fraser Brown  
Emma Wolf

Focus Puller  
Clapper Loader  
Video Split Operators

Brendan Holster  
Johnny Yarrell  
Brad Wood  
James Rua

Best Boy  
Lighting Assistants

Tane Kingan  
Kent Pickmere  
Phil Totoro  
Rob Mita

Grip Assistant

Continuity  
Sound Assistant  
Stills Photographer

Guy Strachan  
Kendall Finlayson  
Juanita Dobson

Wardrobe/ Make-up  
Prosthetics  
Contributing Artist

Victoria Joe  
Mark Knight  
Otis Chamberlain

Location Scout/ Manager  
Location Manager  
Unit Manager  
Unit Assistant

Sam McCauley  
Alice Carstensen  
Scott McCauley  
Natalye Mace

Lenses  
Camera  
Stock

Camera Quip Australia  
Panavision New Zealand  
Fuji Film

Processing  
Telecine  
Negative Cut  
Post production  
Tape Grade  
Sound Recording

Film Lab  
Images Post  
Fine Cut  
Film Unit  
Oktobor  
Park Road Post

Assistant Editor

Kirsty McDowell

Editing facility  
Titles

Oktobor  
Wynter Graphic Design

Telecine Colourist  
Post Production co-ordinator  
Colour Grading  
Grading Assistant  
Opticals  
Rostrum  
Sound Editor  
Tape Grade

Kim Hickey  
Brian Scadden  
Lynne Reed  
Simon Tomlinson  
Brian Scadden  
Reiner Schoenbrun  
Melanie Graham  
Ben Rogers