

The Orchard

MEDIA KIT

Note: please download production still images separately. They are available on the film’s website: <http://www.orchardmovie.com/press-kit-index/ - press-kit>.

Genre: Dramatic Comedy
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One-Liners

The life of brash Los Angeles talent agent, Max Roth, changes when he unexpectedly inherits a peach orchard from an eccentric aunt in Canada’s lush Okanagan Valley.

The life of an LA talent agent changes when he inherits a peach orchard from an eccentric aunt in Canada.

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Synopsis (short)

Brash Los Angeles talent agent Max Roth unexpectedly inherits a small peach orchard from an eccentric Aunt – in Canada. Max travels to British Columbia’s Okanagan Valley expecting to make a quick sale to foreign developers and move on. His life changes as he becomes

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enchanted with the countryside, the old house, and a firebrand activist named Olive who is hell-bent on stopping the sale.

LA talent agent Max Roth inherits a peach orchard from an eccentric Aunt – in Canada. Max travels to British Columbia, expecting to make a quick sale. Things change when he meets a firebrand activist who is hell-bent on stopping the sale.

Principal Cast

Matt Angel
Morgan Taylor Campbell
John Cassini
Sean MacLean
Chris McNally
Romon Podhora
Brandi Alexander
Jarrett Knowles
Bryan Demore
Devyn Dalton
Taylor St. Pierre

Written and Directed by

Kate Twa

Produced by

Kate Twa
Ronan Reinart
Michael Collins

Technical Information:

Original Language: English
Shooting Format: 4K Canon RMF
Exhibition Format: 2K/4K DCP
Runtime: 1:41
Audio: Dolby 5.1

Director's Statement

I think it takes bravery be happy. I don't think choosing to see beauty is without its challenges, and I certainly don't think change is.

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With *The Orchard* I wanted to explore how we cope with barriers. Life is full of barriers— borders, boxes. They arise between us and our ability to find pleasure, seek adventure and love with abandon. The walls thicken over time and mysteries become daunting. How can some live life as an adventure and others as a task? Can you change? How do you keep fire burning in your belly?

Max inherits a peach orchard from an eccentric aunt he barely remembers – but he does remember. It's in there - the playful, free spirit he had when he was young. It got buried under empty ambition, desensitized living and gluten free food. Max's mystery starts with a burden and ends with a change.

I am not a fluff monger. I have waded through material that can literally make people faint. My first film, *Gods of Youth* focused on kids and crystal meth with unflinching grit. That was the story we wanted to tell and we didn't back down from it. *The Orchard* took a different kind of courage. It was born from deep sadness in me and a choice to hunt for beauty.

I don't negate other emotions. I adore my anger. It shows me what I don't want - but what will show me what I do want? Love baby, only love. Corny has hell but truer than tomatoes.

So I started writing *The Orchard* and in a month I had a first draft. From typing the title to seeing the end credits took less than a year. The damn thing wanted to be written, the story wanted to be told, the characters wanted to come alive and the sultry Okanagan Valley in BC wanted to expose herself to the world. Love baby, only love.

"Stop acting so small." -- Rumi

A note on the ensemble cast of *The Orchard*

I have spent most of my life in black box theatre. Many years as an actress, as a theatre director and as an instructor. If you choose to read the actors' bios, you'll see that almost all studied with me. We've wrestled around in the sanctity and monstrosity of the black box. This had a huge impact on writing both my films and of course, in casting them. I've had the unique advantage of spending years in the black box with these actors (not a few minutes in a sterile audition room). I've seen them work, WORK. I've seen them be both magnificent and utterly, beautifully dreadful. I'm a bad ass in the classroom. Relentless, bossy, impossible and at times a little crazed. On set, I got to watch them tell my story with grace, courage and insight (and then lug equipment back to the truck). I am humbled and inspired by what they are capable of and I saw it unfold in both my films. I will see it in many more.

--Kate Twa, August, 2016

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Synopsis (long)

Los Angeles talent agent Max Roth has a hectic life. He knows people; he makes phone calls; he spends his days in busy Los Angeles traffic and in a busy Los Angeles office, trying to attach A-listers to projects, turn his B-listers into A-listers and keep deals alive. He's good, he's really good but Max didn't always want to be a talent agent. He wanted to be a writer. . . But life has a way of pushing you along unexpected paths and here he is: Max now . He thinks he knows his life's trajectory, but then an envelope arrives from an obscure Canadian law firm.

He learns that his Aunt May had passed away, leaving him executor and sole beneficiary of her estate. It had been almost 20 years since he had seen his aunt, and he didn't remember much about her. He is shocked that she would leave her estate to him. As Max's mom, Val, puts it, "it was easier for strangers to know Aunt May than for the rest of us."

Max learns that Aunt May's estate consists of a peach orchard just outside of Peachland, on British Columbia's Okanagan Lake. He tells his mom that he plans on selling the property as quickly as possible. Then he goes to B.C. intent on doing just that.

It's an alien world to him: this is the heart of B.C.'s fruit-belt, sloping landscape dappled with vineyards and orchards, apples, cherries, apricots, and, of course, peaches. Arriving at Aunt May's home he is greeted by the clutter of her colorful life: mischievous fairy dolls, exotic knickknacks and fragments of memory that make the old house feel alive. That and a naked woman chained to a peach tree.

The naked woman is Olivia ("Olive") Cunningham. Olive was a close friend of Aunt May's and is devastated by both the loss of her friend and the possibility that this serene orchard could be sold for development (which Aunt May never would have wanted). Flanked by her closest friends and trusted sidekicks Trixy and Stilts, Olive has chained herself to the tree in naked protest.

She has also filed a legal challenge to May's will, claiming to be May's daughter and seeking to have the will declared invalid. Since she is not, in fact, May's daughter (a requirement of such a legal challenge), she suspects the legal action won't work, but the process will give her time, she thinks, to come up with a new plan.

That new plan is seduction. She and the Okanagan take Max on an unexpected journey: fruit, bread, wine, goats, a strange doctor, a runaway pig, a magical bonfire, and sensual delights in the candle light. Something in Max changes—wakes up. Life is not about a result, but a process. The things and people populating the world are not just there as accessories and shared experiences can be magical if you open your eyes, stop chasing things, and let them in.

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There are a few more challenges in store for Max, but he learns to approach them with a sense of optimism. He finally articulates that he wants to 'stop chasing his life so he can be in it'. Life is not about a finish line, dead-end jobs and dead-end relationships. It's about freedom, and for that, it seems, all you have to do is see the potential, and then. . . jump.

Actor Bios

Matt Angel

A Southern California native, Matt Angel started his acting career early, with a number of TV show guest appearances. Currently, Matt recurs on MTV's new dramedy *Sweet/Vicious* premiering Fall 2016. Select television credits include USA's drama series *Complications*, *Grimm*, *Longmire*, *The Night Shift*, *Major Crimes* and *Common Law*. Film credits include a number of acclaimed independent films. As writer/producer/director, Matt created a pilot, *Half*, which was sold to Sony Pictures TV, and set up at NBC. Matt has developed a number of projects and, on the feature side, has been commissioned to write for Millennium and Broken Road Productions. Four years ago, Matt began traveling to Vancouver yearly to study with Kate Twa at Railtown Actors Studio.

Morgan Taylor Campbell

Morgan was born and raised in Fort McMurray, Alberta, in the middle of five siblings and a herd of pets. Recent work includes: *Power Rangers*, *The Killing*, and *Sadie's Last Days on Earth*. For her, acting has become much more than a dream of lights but opened a window to the human condition and a search for truth. Under the mentorship of Kate Twa, Morgan has begun to develop her craft and her imagination. Currently, she divides her time between L.A. and Vancouver, but hopes to find herself living on a horse ranch and building cars someday.

Chris McNally

Chris McNally is a Vancouver local whose selected work includes *Lucifer*, *Dead of Summer*, *Falling Skies* and *Supernatural*, and the upcoming MOW *Same Time Next Week*. In the feature film *John Apple Jack*, Chris won the Audience Award for Best Actor in a Feature Film at the Film Out festival in San Diego. He has always loved storytelling and the connections that transcend stage and screen. Chris has been studying with Kate and Railtown Actors Studio for 4 years. Future aspirations include continuing his studies in New York and London, and writing/directing his own feature films.

Roman Podhora

Born in the Czech Republic, Roman grew up in a small mountain town of Fernie, B.C., moved to Vancouver in the early 80s, and graduated from Studio 58. Roman has appeared in more than 150 films and TV shows including *Chicago*, *The Shipping News*, *Fringe*, and *Supernatural*. He has also appeared in numerous stage productions throughout the province (including a production of Leonard Melfi's *Birdbath* where he met Kate Twa). The Orchard marks Romans

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return after a lengthy hiatus in which he has been operating boats throughout the Caribbean in the west coast of North America.

Sean MacLean

Sean MacLean is a Vancouver-based actor whose highlights include getting his heart ripped out – literally – on the hit show *Supernatural* and kissing supermodel Rebecca Romijn on *King and Maxwell*. Sean has also been on *The Killing* and barely clothed in Blind Pig's smash stage show *Kitty, Kitty, Kitty*. Aside from being an athlete for years, Sean also specializes in flair bartending. Sean has been working with Kate Twa and Railtown's dynamic team of instructors and actors for 4 years.

John Cassini

John is an accomplished TV, film and stage actor both in Canada and the U.S. with several Gemini nominations, Leo Awards, and UBCP/ACTRA award nominations. He has developed TV shows for various networks and produced four feature films. TV credits include extensive guest-starring roles as well as series regulars and recurring roles on *Robson Arms*, *DaVinci's Inquest*, *Intelligence*, *Continuum* and *Blackstone*. Feature credits include Hollywood studio films such as *Alive*, *Se7en*, *Get Carter* and *The Game* as well as many independent films that include *The Resurrection of Tony Gitone*, *Three Days in Havana*, and *Break a Leg* (co-writer and winner of nine U.S. festival awards including Best Actor). John has also been a personal acting coach and teacher for over 20 years and is Co-Artistic Director of the Railtown Actors Studio and a lifetime member of the Actors Studio in New York and LA. www.JohnCassini.com

Brendan Taylor

While working on the other side of the camera in Set Decoration, Brendan met Kate in 2008 which boosted his love and pursuit of acting and he decided to make the leap to be in front of the camera. Equally in love with theatre, he first stepped on stage in *Blind Pig Theatre's Suburbia*, and subsequently moved on to *Kitty Kitty Kitty*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, and as 'the Creature' in *Frankenstein*. Brendan was most recently on stage in *For The Record*, a sold-out run of Railtown Lab's inaugural show. Selected TV and film credits: *Supernatural*, *Fargo*, *iZombie* and *Charlotte's Song*.

Bryan Demore

A graduate of York University's Acting Conservatory, Bryan has worked as an actor for over 14 years in Vancouver and Toronto. Credits include *Sir John A*, *The L Word*, *The Life*, *Just Living*, and *Microwave* as well as over twenty stage productions across Canada. He has studied with Kate Twa, Nancy Sivak, John Cassini, David Smukler and Melee Hutton. His company, A Lasting Dose Productions, has created film and theatre projects, and his last two shorts have premiered at VIFF, Cannes, CIFF, Bronx Int'l Film Festival and Cincinnati Film Festival.

Taylor St. Pierre

Taylor began his acting career when he first moved to Vancouver from his hometown Kamloops. He has traveled across the country for work in Montreal, Calgary and the interior of B.C. on shows such as *Ascension* on SyFy, *Hell on Wheels* on AMC and *Supernatural* on CW.

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He has been training with Kate Twa and the Railtown Team for two years and working on a play to premiere at Railtown Lab in September.

Devyn Dalton

Devyn was born in Edmonton, Alberta and at age 11, was scouted by a talent agent who recruited her to the film and television industry in Vancouver. She was soon cast as Baby June in the musical *Gypsy* and her extensive dance and performance training led to touring worldwide with salsa and hip-hop dance troupes as well as winning many gold medals and dance scholarships. Landing her first feature film, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* began her career as a motion capture artist and stunt performer. Some of her credits include *Percy Jackson: The Sea of Monster*, *Godzilla*, *Once Upon A Time*, *Arrow*, *White House Down*, *Supernatural*, *Fringe*, *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *Falling Skies*, *Dead Rising*, *Travelers*, *Wonder* and most recently, Steven Spielberg's *The BFG*. Devyn has been working with Kate Twa and the Railtown Team since 2013.

Brandi Alexander

Brandi Alexander, born and raised in Vancouver B.C., started acting classes at a young age and began modeling at 13. She was a contestant in Canada's *Next Top Model* in its first season and appeared in *Deal or no Deal Canada*. Brandi has appeared in *Smallville*, *Psych*, *Motive*, *Girlfriends Guide to Divorce*, *Supernatural*. In 2015 she filmed a miniseries in Moscow: *Insomnia*, is currently filming a recurring role on *Romeo Section*.

Jarrett Knowles

A native of Vancouver, B.C., Jarrett's passion for film began early and has developed over the years. A self-described "cinefile", Jarrett spreads his knowledge and film library to his peers (and instructor Kate Twa) at Railtown Actors Studio. Jarrett is a graduate of Studio 58. Recent credits include *Arctic Air*, *Supernatural*, and *When Calls the Heart*.

Production Team Bios

Kate Twa

The Orchard is Kate's 2nd feature film (following up 2011's 'Gods of Youth'). She has been in the industry for over 25 years as an actress, stage director, teacher and coach.

Kate has directed over two dozen stage plays, written three stage plays which have been produced across Canada, and has taught thousands of students in the craft of Acting. She is known for her creative tenacity and fearless exploration of otherwise difficult subject-matter, as well as her humour and deep scope of expression.

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As the founding Artistic Director of Vancouver's prestigious Railtown Actors Studio (www.railtownactors.com), Kate works closely with a highly trained ensemble of professional actors.

Ronan Reinart

The Orchard is Ronan's 3rd feature film as cinematographer. With the keen eye of a stand-out cinematographer and a wealth of experience in editing and digital visual effects, Ronan brings a deep understanding of the filmmaking process—both in production and post-production. This is invaluable on set, as it allows a leaner more efficient production environment and results in stunning visuals that otherwise would not be available to smaller independent productions.

Michael Collins

The Orchard is Michael's 7th film as a producer. Michael has spent the last decade working as an assistant director in the Vancouver film industry on films such as I Robot, Underworld 2 & 4, Night at the Museum, Deadpool, and Star Trek. As such, Michael has extensive experience overseeing the most demanding and complex production environments. He brings to The Orchard both his impressive practical experience and a passionate creative sense, honed over a decade in the film industry.

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