Mongrel Media
Presents

DOWN TO THE DIRT
Based on the novel by Joel Thomas Hynes

Directed by Justin Simms

Starring
Joel Thomas Hynes
Mylène Savoie
Robert Joy
and
Hugh Dillon

(114 mins, 2008, Canada)

Distribution

Bonne Smith
Star PR
Tel: 416-488-4436
Fax: 416-488-8438
E-mail: starpr@sympatico.ca

Publicity

E-mail: info@mongrelmedia.com
www.mongrelmedia.com

High Res stills may be downloaded from http://www.mongrelmedia.com/press.html
**Log Line A:**
Keith Kavanagh (Joel Thomas Hynes) is a constant disappointment to himself. And to everyone else, except Natasha (Mylène Savoie). Their relationship - turbulent, raw and funny - becomes the catalyst for loss, joy and self-discovery.

**Log Line B:**
A darkly humorous chronicle of one man’s improbable redemption.

**Short Synopsis:**
*Down to the Dirt* is a visceral, darkly humorous chronicle of the transformative power of love, and the improbable roads that lead to redemption. Thirty-year-old Keith Kavanagh (Joel Thomas Hynes) ekes his way through life in a small town. A hard-drinking hooligan, he keeps his ragged collection of poetry a closely guarded secret... as secret as his regret for the shattered relationship with his father. When Keith meets the darkly exotic Natasha (Mylène Savoie), his life is changed forever. Scary, sexy, and funny -- and sometimes all three at once - *Down to the Dirt* is a raw and poignant adaptation of the internationally acclaimed novel.

**Long Synopsis:**
*Down to the Dirt* is a darkly humorous chronicle of one man’s improbable redemption. Keith Kavanagh (Joel Thomas Hynes) is the turbulent hero of this visceral feature film adaptation of the internationally acclaimed novel.

As we meet Keith Kavanagh, he may have almost burned down the north side of the Cove, his small Newfoundland hometown. His hard-drinking, hard-ticket, hooligan ways have made him a legend throughout the southern shore. He keeps his ragged collection of Bukowski-esque poetry a closely guarded secret... as well as his deep regret towards his shattered relationship with his father (Robert Joy).

When he meets the darkly exotic Natasha (Mylène Savoie), Keith’s life is changed forever. A firecracker much like himself, the beautiful Natasha longs to break free from the small town, small mind existence of the Cove. For once Keith feels passion not for debauchery and destruction, but for something even more dangerous: love.

After a rash move to St. John’s that ends in the botched mercy killing of their beloved kitty Puss-Cat (and soon fed-up with Keith’s self-adventures), Natasha leaves him to move to Halifax. Alone and as self-abusingly over-dramatic as always, Keith faces the reality he has spent his lifetime neglecting: that he alone is responsible for his own miserable lot in life. He decides there is but one way to save himself from certain ruin: He must get to Halifax. He must find Natasha!

*Down to the Dirt* is a sexy, scary, and funny ride about creating a new self out of the burning ashes of the old.
Origins of Dirt

As many such journeys begin, *Down to the Dirt* started with a decision at the dining room table. In 2004 Writer/Director Justin Simms, Producer Anna Petras, Novelist/Lead Actor Joel Hynes and Co-Screenwriter Sherry White sat over tea and agreed to make the feature film adaptation of Joel’s first novel, *Down to the Dirt*, in which his ne’er-do-well alter ego, Keith Kavanagh, finds a most improbable redemption. Four years and thousands of cups of tea later, the film exists. (And all four key players are still alive.)

Though the story is set largely in Newfoundland, the filmmakers were intent to make a film that, in the words of director Simms, “isn’t burdened by its regionalism, but rather made universal by it.” The film has three main geographic locations – the rural Cove, downtown St. John’s, and finally a gothic rendering of nighttime Halifax. These locations come to mirror the emotional points of Keith’s journey, so Simms was intent to not fall into the visual traps Newfoundland in particular, has to offer. It’s called “Down to the Dirt,” not “Down to the Beautiful Sunset.” So we tried to show a different side of St. John’s, one that isn’t captured enough in films that are shot here. The urban side, the decay, the character inherent in the cracks.”

Also key to the early life of the film was the decision that Joel would play the lead role. A unique structure to be sure – playing the lead role in the film version of the book he wrote about himself. Says Simms, “Joel, having written the book, and having played the character on stage -- it was really his energy, his presence, his comedy, that made one think “Down to the Dirt” could be a film. To capture the energy of “Joel-as-Keith”, and making that combination work in the structure of a feature film, was as much an impetus to make this film as anything else.”
Director's Statement and Q&A with Justin Simms:

**Down to the Dirt** is a universal story about what is perhaps the most vital realization we will all (hopefully) make at some point in our lives: that we alone are responsible for our own happiness. We cannot depend on others, be it a lover, or a father, to give our lives definition. Only when we are at peace with ourselves, can we truly be at peace with others. This truth, though seemingly evident, is often hard to acknowledge, especially if life has not gone the way we intended. This truth is the “dirt” of the title. The very future of the tortured, sensitive, and ultimately ironic Keith Kavanagh depends on his ability to make this realization. **Down to the Dirt** charts his journey from the clean simple, reliable tenets of self-destruction and delusion, to the dirty, ragged reality of his only chance at redemption. Many of us will take a similar journey of the spirit. The great Newfoundland poet Al Pittman best summed up this sentiment when he once wrote:

“Going toward yourself is the longest journey of all.”

**Q: What are the key differences between the book and the film?**

Perhaps the most important difference is the age of our main character, Keith Kavanagh. In the book he goes from 19 to 23. This had a huge benefit, thematically. Our film is about Keith coming to make a decision about how he’s going to lead the rest of his life. Personally, to me, a nineteen or twenty year old making that decision does not carry the weight, or the power - the sheer believability - of a thirty-year-old making the same decision. It also raised the stakes of Keith’s actions. When he starts the fire in the town, for example, it’s one thing for a 19 year-old to do it, as in the book, if the guy is thirty, however, it’s a much bigger deal. More dramatic. Bigger consequences. This was one of the most important changes we made in writing the screenplay, without question. The guy at the end of the movie is not the guy at the end of the book. We all really liked this idea.

As well, our film focuses more on the love story between Keith and Natasha. This has an effect on the overall tone, obviously. Keith’s actions and state of mind in the film are based largely on Natasha’s presence, or absence. In the structure of a film, this streamlines his journey, makes it more accessible. And, perhaps most importantly, I am a sucker for a good love story. (And always have been.)

**Q: How would you describe the film, visually?**

Visually we are stripped down, as in: our film is about people first and foremost, so Jordan [Director of Photography Jordan Lynn] and I wanted to make a film where the faces are what tell the story. Their emotions, their physicality, are what provide most of our visual canvas. We studied films like Babel, and Half Nelson, as we felt these films illustrated the power this kind of approach can result in. As
Dirt has three primary geographies (the small town Cove, downtown St. John’s, and Halifax,) it was a good challenge to give each place their own look, their own feel, relating it to Keith’s state of mind at whatever place he’s in. We were careful to pick and choose the moments where we’d use “technique,” to get our point across. Though we enjoyed these moments as well, don’t get me wrong. We tried to build a healthy relationship, visually, between telling the audience what to see, and letting them see what they choose to see.

Q: How did you decide on the use of music on the film?

I have been a fan of Mark Bragg’s for years. I think he is Newfoundland’s best-kept musical secret. His sound – Tom Waits meets Radiohead, has always appealed to me. I felt Down to the Dirt, in terms of its musical palette, ought to be rock-based, and though Mark had never scored a film before, I thought his unique sound, and the kinds of things he writes about on his records, thematically, had a lot in common with Down to the Dirt. As Mark and I worked on the score – in addition to the traditional underscore moments - Mark began writing songs, like “The Fighter,” then “Fire Sign,” and soon I really liked the idea of Mark’s voice being another character in the film. I think he did an amazing job.
Getting the Dirt with Novelist and Actor Joel Thomas Hynes:

Q : What was the inspiration for the novel?

The story had been percolating in my head for years, although it was a long time before it took on the look of a novel. If I were to go over all my old journals from the back end of high school and my early twenties I know I could find lesser developed versions of certain aspects of the book as it stands today. As a theme, both in writing and in terms of personal mythology, I’ve always been most drawn to self-destruction and the more ambiguous side of redemption. By the time I was twenty-three, which was around the age I was when I started working on the novel, I had pretty much destroyed myself physically and socially and spiritually and all I had left was this desire to rise above my own battered self-image. So I wrote my first book as a sort of means of recreating and reconstructing a life I was equally proud of and ashamed for having lived.

Q: How would you describe Keith and his journey in the film?

Keith is a very unsettled, frustrated individual who feels hemmed in by the constraints of his small town existence and wants to escape so bad that he continuously reaches out for the wrong remedy - drugs, booze, sex, hooliganism. He thinks he’s a tough guy and tries hard to make other people think it too. He’s also pretty smart and hungry for knowledge, very well read and interested in words. But he never seems to put enough stock in his literary interests, never seems to realize that it can be a good aspect of his life, or that it’s potentially a real path he can go down. He’s more ashamed of it than anything else. And coming from a small dead-end town as he does, there’s not much support or resources for a guy with those sorts of interests. So the one thing he’s good at is something he instinctively hides. Then he meets Natasha, likely his first big love, and he suddenly finds himself comfortable sharing that side of himself. They fall in love and high-tail it out of town together and Keith thinks he’s leaving all his troubles behind. But they both soon realize that there is no such thing as a geographical cure. Yes it can help you gain a fresh perspective, but ultimately we are always going to wake up in the same skin we were born in. Keith’s journey in the film is one of learning to accept responsibility for who he really is and who he is to become. Of course he has a lot of drunken, maniacal fun getting to the end of the line, no doubt about that.

Q: What was it like playing the lead, having written the novel?

Christ. Someone came up to me during the filming and said: -- Well it mustn’t be too hard to play yourself in a movie? I told him to go fuck himself. Because the truth is it was oftentimes confusing and it got me back in touch with a lot of old devils that I’d thought were long since buried. And the fact of the matter is that I had some extremely emotional scenes in the film that I really had to work hard with. Just because I might have broken down crying over a situation in real life years ago doesn’t mean it’s an easy
place to go back to when the camera is rolling. And it was difficult not to be self-conscious performing a certain line of dialogue or type of behaviour, when it’s common knowledge that the original text is supposed to be really autobiographical. But... you know the book came out when I was twenty-seven and was based on my adolescence right up to probably the age of twenty-one. So here I was at thirty, the father of a little boy with a decent career and a pretty stable life, playing “myself”? Well that’s just horseshit. I was so far removed from Keith’s psyche and self-image that if not for the experience I’ve gathered up on other movie sets and TV shows and theatre gigs, I seriously doubt I would have been able to play this role. Because in the end that’s just what it was, a role I was playing. But I will say this: in the scene where Keith is lying in the alley in Halifax passed out drunk in the rain, those leather pants he has on are the same leather pants that Hynes (that’s me, referring to myself in the third person) wore all those years ago when he was passed out drunk in Halifax in the pissing down rain. So doing the movie got me thinking a lot about personal mythology and how we never can know for sure where we’re gonna turn up or how things can work themselves out. I know back then I always felt like I was in a really dark movie about my own life that no one else found funny. But if someone had leant down and whispered in my ear while I was lying there in the gutter that one day this very scenario would be filmed in a movie based on a book that I would write about my life... well I guess I would have just went for a drink somewhere and waited around for the offers to start rolling in.
The Process & Production:


Shortly after, Harper Collins Canada picked up the novel for national publication. The group of four friends decided it was time to move forward and turn this great story into a feature film.

The script was co-written by Justin Simms and Sherry White.

The film was developed and produced with funding from Telefilm Canada and the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation with production financing also coming from The Movie Network and Movie Central.

The film is distributed in Canada by Mongrel Media.

The film is the first feature for co-writer/director/producer Justin Simms and Producer Anna Petras. Executive Producers are Nicholas Tabarrok (Darius Films) and Jennice Ripley (Kickham East Productions).

Down to the Dirt stars novelist and actor Joel Thomas Hynes as Keith, Montreal actress Mylène Savoie as Natasha, Robert Joy (CSI NY, Whole New Thing, Atlantic City) as Robert and Hugh Dillon (Hard Core Logo, Durham County, Flashpoint). Supporting roles are played by Phil Churchill (Andy), Jody Richardson (Francey), Shemy White (Sally-Anne), Glenn Downey (Officer Stanton) and Mary Lewis (Mrs. Healy).

Filming took place in Pouch Cove, NL, Flatrock, NL, St. John’s, NL and Halifax, NS.
**Key Cast Bios:**

**Joel Thomas Hynes as Keith Kavanagh**

Joel Thomas Hynes is from Calvert, Newfoundland and has won various awards for writing in different media. His novels *Down to the Dirt* (2005) and *Right Away Monday* (2007) have been published to widespread national and international acclaim by Harper Collins Canada.

Hynes co-wrote the celebrated stageplay *The Devil You Don’t Know* and his most recent play *Say Nothing Saw Wood*, which was produced by the RCA Theatre Co in 2007, won the NL Arts and Letters Award for Best Dramatic Script.

Also an actor, Hynes has performed numerous leading roles for stage, film and television. He was a contributing writer and played a leading role in the CBC’s *Hatching, Matching and Dispatching*, and in 2007 performed in The Movie Network’s *Re-Genesis*, Newfound Film’s *Ashore* and *Heartless Disappearance Into Labrador Seas* and played the lead role in the feature film adaptation of his novel *Down to the Dirt*.

This past spring Hynes was presented with the Lawrence Jackson Creative Writing Award and was also named the Newfoundland and Labrador Art’s Council’s Artist of the Year.

Hynes is now working on an original screenplay, a collection of personal essays, and a children’s book about the slippery nature of addiction.

**Mylène Savoie as Natasha Healy**

Mylène was born in New Brunswick. She has explored her artistic creativity since she was three - always seeking a way to perform somewhere, whether it was in dance or theatre, music and most recently - television and film acting.

She moved to Montreal in 1999 to study professional dance at Les Ateliers de Danse de Montréal. Upon graduating, she turned to theatre and found a love for improv. She was soon cast in various roles in television series. Some included a nurse in *Canada en Amour*, a perky waitress on *450 chemin du Golf* and a seductive, naïve and dangerous Hilary in *The Saboteurs*.

Recently she has taken professional workshops with Danielle Fichaud, Jean-Pierre Bergeron and Warren Robertson from the Actor’s Studio. Her work is qualified as fresh and surprising. All of her physical studies in movement and dance show in her work.

Most recently, Mylène stars in the leading role of Natasha in the independent feature film *Down to the Dirt*.

**Robert Joy as Robert Kavanagh**

After attending Oxford on a Rhodes scholarship, Joy returned to St. John’s Newfoundland and joined the comedy group CODCO. Although he moved to New York three years later when he was cast as Peter in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Joy remained involved with the planning of and performing in the Codco feature film *The Adventures of Faustus Bidgood*. 

In 1980, Joy made a sensational film debut in Louis Malle’s Atlantic City opposite Susan Sarandon. He then alternated between work on the New York stage, and roles in other films such as Ragtime, and Ticket to Heaven. Subsequent film roles include Madonna's boyfriend in Desperately Seeking Susan, Harriet's dad in Harriet the Spy, Denzel Washington's antagonist in Fallen and the troubled father in The Divine Ryans (with Pete Postlethwaite). In most recent years, Joy was one of the leads in George Romero’s Land of the Dead. He was one of the leads in the HBO comedy series The High Life and the ABC series MDs. He has guest starred on many shows including Alias, Without a Trace, The Agency, Gideon’s Crossing, Star Trek: Voyager and Law & Order. Joy is presently a series regular on CBS’s CSI: NY playing the role of Dr. Sid Hammerback.

Hugh Dillon as Renny

Dillon was nominated for a 2007 Genie Award for ‘Best Supporting Actor’ for his role as Sonny in Canadian box office hit The Trailer Park Boys: The Movie. He received critical acclaim when he starred opposite Vera Farmiga (The Departed) in the Sundance Film Festival award winning movie, Down To The Bone. “Dillon’s performance as a man who only seems to have it together is marvelous in every detail” – Variety Magazine. Dillon’s repertoire of notable roles in feature films includes Lone Hero also starring Robert Forster and Sean Patrick Flannery, 2005’s Assault on Precinct 13 with Ethan Hawke and the cult classic Ginger Snaps: The Prequel as well as television guest-starring appearances on The 11th Hour, Regeneris, Degrassi: The Next Generation to name a few.

Dillon played Mike Sweeney in The Movie Network / Movie Central’s highly anticipated new series, Durham County. Durham County follows the tormented life of Detective Mike Sweeney, a world-weary homicide detective and his wife Audrey (Hélène Joy, ReGenesis) and daughters Sadie (Laurence Leboeuf, Human Trafficking) and Maddie (Cecily Austin). Hugh Dillon’s ability to capture honest, realistic portrayals of complicated characters has been his calling card. Born May 31, 1963 in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, Hugh Rush Dillon landed his first big screen part in the notorious director Bruce McDonald’s Dance Me Outside (1994). Next came his critically acclaimed lead performance as Joe Dick in McDonald’s 1996 feature film, Hard Core Logo. “Hard Core Logo is an often hilarious, surprisingly poignant chronicle of the seamier side of life... Dillon is full of raging energy as Joe Dick” – Variety Magazine. The film and in particular Dillon’s performance caught the eye of legendary filmmaker Quentin Tarantino and his company, Rolling Thunder Pictures who distributed the movie and brought international attention to the revered indie classic and its lead actor.

This July, Dillon can be seen in the role of team leader/lead sniper, Ed Lane in the TV series, Flashpoint. Combining acting with a commendable career as a singer songwriter, Dillon first earned notoriety in Canada and abroad as the lead singer in the multi-platinum rock and roll band, The Headstones. Signed to Universal Music in the early
nineties, the band released six albums. After the Headstones he formed the Hugh Dillon Redemption Choir and released The High Cost Of Low Living. Transcending the rock world, Dillon has consistently scored and written compositions for numerous movie and television productions including Durham County. Hugh Dillon currently resides in Los Angeles and Toronto.

**Production Companies:**

**NEWFOUND FILMS**
Newfound Films Inc. was established in 2001 by Anna Petras and Justin Simms prior to production of their one hour drama Ashore. The film, (written & directed by Simms, produced by Petras), premiered at the Atlantic Film Festival in 2002, was the closing night gala at the St. John's International Women's Film Festival that same year, and went on to screen at festivals throughout Canada. Ashore was honoured with three prestigious Golden Sheaf Awards at the 2003 Yorkton Film Festival: Best Director (Simms) Best Actor (Joel Hynes), and Best Drama. The film was broadcast by CBC in April, 2004.
Their next short film The King Hunt won one of five National Screen Institute/CBC ZeD Drama Prizes. In March 2005, the film made its world premiere at the NSI's Film Exchange Festival in Winnipeg and aired on CBC and Air Canada. In 2005/2006, Simms attended the Canadian Film Centre’s Director’s Residency Programme in Toronto and completed the highly successful “Face Machine”, a 15- minute short through the NBC/Universal Short Film Programme.

Newfound Films is committed to establishing themselves as producers of thought provoking, challenging films with mass appeal. The company's current slate of feature film projects include:

**DOWN TO THE DIRT** COMPLETED Based on the award-winning novel by Joel Thomas Hynes. Screenwriters: Justin Simms & Sherry White, Director: Justin Simms

**THE KING HUNT** IN DEVELOPMENT Based on the short film script The King Hunt. Screenwriter: Justin Simms, Story Editor: Greg Spottiswood, Supported by: Telefilm Canada and the NLFDC

**THREE DOGS BARKING** IN DEVELOPMENT Based on the play Three Dogs Barking. Screenwriter: Frank Barry, Story Consultant: Justin Simms, Supported by: NLFDC and the NLAC

Newfound Films is based in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador.
Darius Films is a prolific film and television production company with offices in Los Angeles and Toronto. Since its launch in 1998, they have produced over a dozen features that have received commercial, critical and festival success.

This year has already been a busy one for Darius Films, having produced the comedy COOPER'S CAMERA starring Jason Jones and Samantha Bee (of The Daily Show with Jon Stewart), which will be featured at the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival. Also at this year’s festival is DOWN TO THE DIRT, an east coast drama that Darius produced in association with Newfound Films.

Our most recent success was WEIRDSVILLE, starring Scott Speedman, Wes Bentley and Taryn Manning, and directed by Allan Moyle (Pump Up the Volume, Empire Records). The film was the opening film for the 2007 Slamdance Film Festival and received a glowing review in Variety. It was released in October 2008 by Magnolia Pictures.

Upcoming releases include HANK AND MIKE, an outrageous and original tale of two hard-living Easter bunnies who get downsized, starring Joe Mantegna and Chris Klein, and SURVIVING CROOKED LAKE, which premiered at the 2008 Slamdance Film Festival.

Recently released by THINKFilm in the U.S. is THE LIFE AND HARD TIMES OF GUY TERRIFICO, starring music superstars Kris Kristofferson, Merle Haggard, Levon Helm and Ronnie Hawkins. TERRIFICO premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival of 2005 and went on to win the Best First Time Director Award. It was also named one of the top ten Canadian films of 2005, and was voted the best Canadian Film of 2005 by the readers of ‘Inside Entertainment‘ Magazine.

Darius Films remains busy with a number of projects in production and in development. They are currently in partnership with animation studio 9 Stories on a pilot for an adult animated series called FUGGETABOUTIT, which centers around a mob family that gets placed in a witness protection program, and will go into production later this year.
Filmmaker Bios:

Justin Simms (Director, Co-writer, Producer, Editor)

Short Bio

Justin Simms is an award-winning writer, director and co-founder of Newfound Films, in St. John’s, Newfoundland. His short films have garnered acclaim and prizes at film festivals throughout Canada and the rest of the world. Punch-Up at a Wedding won awards for best screenplay, best director and best Atlantic Short at the 2006 Atlantic Film Festival. Down to the Dirt marks Justin’s debut as a feature film director.

Full Bio

Justin Simms is an award-winning writer and filmmaker, and co-owner of Newfound Films with producer Anna Petras. In 2007 Justin directed his debut feature film, Down to the Dirt. Also in 2007 Justin directed Heartless Disappearance into Labrador Seas, a thirty-minute TV pilot for CBC, written by Justin’s frequent collaborator, Lois Brown (The Bingo Robbers) “Heartless” stars Liane Balaban and Andy Jones.

In 2006 Justin’s short film Punch-up at a Wedding premiered at the 26th Atlantic Film Festival, where it was awarded the Best Screenplay, Best Atlantic Short and Best Director prizes. The darkly humored comedy was invited to make its international premiere as an Official Selection at the 54th Sydney Film Festival, Australia, later that year.

2006 also saw Justin complete a ten-month directing program at the prestigious Canadian Film Centre. His residency at the CFC culminated in his sci-fi love story Face Machine, which received its world premiere at the Montreal World Film Festival in August 2006 and has subsequently been awarded a Platinum Remmi Award at Cinefest, Houston, and the Best Director prize at the International Horror & Sci-Fi Film Festival in Phoenix, Arizona. Later in 2007 Justin received the great honour of being named Emerging Artist of the Year, by the Newfoundland & Labrador Arts Council.

Justin’s first independent film, 2002’s one-hour drama, Ashore, (following a father and son dealing with crisis in the fishery) played at film festivals throughout Canada and the U.S., and won three Golden Sheaf Awards (Best Drama, Best Director, and Best Actor-Joel Hynes) at the 2003 Yorkton Film Festival. Ashore marked the first meaningful collaboration between Justin, Joel Hynes, and Anna Petras, all three of whom would move into the feature film world together with Down to the Dirt.

Justin currently has three feature screenplays in funded development: the political love story Come From Away; a feature film version of The King Hunt; and Three Dogs Barking, a feature film adaptation of the acclaimed play by Newfoundland playwright Frank Barry. Justin runs PICTURE START at the Newfoundland Independent Filmmakers Cooperative (NIFCO), where he has shot, edited, and mentored more than forty films of varying styles and genres. He is a founding member of the Nickel
Independent Film & Video Festival - a week-long non-profit event, now in its eighth year.  

Currently, Justin is working with documentary filmmaker Gerry Rogers (My Left Breast) on From Her Majesty’s Pen, a feature documentary following a group of inmates as they write an anthology about incarceration. Shooting is ongoing. 

Justin lives and breathes in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada.

**Anna Petras (Producer)**

Anna is a Producer, Production Manager, and co-owner of Newfound Films Inc. After producing a string of highly regarded short films, advertising campaigns, and lifestyle programs, Anna produced her first feature film *Down to the Dirt* in 2007, which will be released theatrically in Canada by Mongrel Media. Through Newfound Films she is developing several properties, including feature films, documentaries, and television projects. As a much sought-after production manager Anna has overseen a host of documentaries for the National Film Board, CTV, and CBC, among others. In 2007 Anna began a position with Super Channel as the Creative Development Representative for Newfoundland and Labrador. Anna is a dedicated advocate of the Film and TV industry and serves as Vice-President of the Producers Association of Newfoundland & Labrador (PAN), Vice-Chair of the St. John’s International Women’s Film Festival and is an active board member of the Newfoundland Independent Filmmakers Cooperative (NIFCO). Anna is based in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Sherry White (Co-writer)**

Sherry White was a performer and writer on the CBC series Hatching, Matching and Dispatching, and was the co-star/co-writer/co-creator of the CBC comedy pilot Rabbittown. She was also a writer on CBC’s one-hour drama series MVP: the Secret Lives of Hockey Wives. Sherry wrote and played the lead in the feature film *The Breadmaker*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2003. She also co-wrote and performed in the feature *Down to the Dirt*. She has several feature films in development, including *Maudie*, a film inspired by the life of folk artist Maud Lewis, and is also the writer/director of the feature film *Crackie*, which goes to camera in fall, 2008. Her short film, Diamonds in a Bucket premiered at the 2007 Toronto International Film Festival, and her short *Spoiled*, premieres at TIFF 2008. Sherry is currently writing an MOW for CTV called When Matt Became Jade, and has just joined the writing team for CBC’s comedy series Sophie.

**Jordan Lynn (Director of Photography)**

Jordan Lynn is a Director of Photography whose skills and creative vision have won awards for the films he has collaborated on. Lynn grew up in Ottawa, studying drawing at the Ottawa School of Art. He majored in cinematography at Ryerson University and for the last ten years has shot films, television and documentaries around North America.

Mark Bragg (Composer & Original Songs)

Hailing from St. John's, Newfoundland, Mark Bragg is a musician and narrative songwriter with a taste for the grit. His own flagship albums (The Reckless Kind and Bear Music) are critically acclaimed internationally, and with them, Bragg has toured extensively through Canada, Germany, and Ireland.

It is no wonder Bragg has been received so well across the pond; Crafting storylines and backdrops that are somehow close to home for us all, Bragg showcases the deepest and darkest of human tendencies, revealing in each of us what we are capable of, what we fail to do and what we fail to avoid. Bragg is as strong a storyteller as he is a musician. His music, though, tells the rest of the story - the parts words can’t suffice. It’s a story we all know. Bragg and his band of butchers will summon you to strut your stuff in this parade we call life.

Most recently, and most fittingly, Bragg scored and composed original songs for the buzzing Newfoundland feature film Down to the Dirt. These days, he's close to home with his partner, Kerrie, and little girl, Jesse, performing regularly in St. John’s with his band of butchers, and enjoying the best summer St. John's has seen in years.
DOWN TO THE DIRT

KEY CAST

Keith Kavanagh  Joel Thomas Hynes
Natasha Healy  Mylène Savoie
Robert Kavanagh  Robert Joy
Renny  Hugh Dillon
Andy O'Toole  Phil Churchill
Francey O'Dea  Jody Richardson
Officer Stanton  Glenn Downey
Sally Anne  Shery White
Nora Healy  Mary Lewis
Mavis Kavanagh  Paula Morgan
Mitch  Steve Cochrane
Monica the Barmaid  Jane Maggs
Miss Sheppard  Lois Brown
Halifax Cabbie  Keith Kelloway
Officer Bowden  Des Walsh
Woman on Shuttle  Renee Abbott
Waiter  Mark Power
Six year old Keith  Percy Hynes-White
Baby Keith  Kristina Andrews
Ten year old Keith  Brian Kelly
Twelve year old Keith  Eric Walsh
Leather Pants Man  Jacob Rolfe
Nun  Sheila Redmond

KEY CREW

Director  Justin Simms
Based on the novel by Joel Thomas Hynes
Screenplay by Justin Simms & Shery White
Producers Anna Petras & Justin Simms
Executive Producers Nicholas Tabarrok & Jennice Ripley
Director of Photography Jordan Lynn
Editor Justin Simms
Original Music by Mark Bragg
Production Designer Pam Hall
Wardrobe Designer Charlotte Reid