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EIGHTEEN

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Eighteen - Synopsis

Pip (Paul Anthony) is a street kid who's meeting life head-on in the big city. On his eighteenth birthday, he receives his grandfather's Second World War memoirs on audiocassette, a gift that awakens the ghost of the long lost world. His grandfather (Brendan Fletcher / portrayed in voice by Ian McKellen) relates the story of the day he turned eighteen, fleeing German forces through the woods of France with a dying comrade (Mark Hildreth) hanging on for life. In Pip's own and contemporary way, he begins to live the parallel life of his grandfather, both lost in their environments and generations.

Along Pip's path he stumbles into an unlikely alliance with Clark (Clarence Sponagle), a gay street hustler on the make, and Jenny (Carly Pope), an aspiring social worker who tempts Pip with feelings of love and domesticity. He also forges a small but important relationship with a local priest (Alan Cumming), in whom he confides his deepest secret: the death of his brother and the heinous act his father committed against him the night he died.

Eighteen is a provocative, emotional human epic. War is fought on many fronts but it does have its reprieves. *Eighteen* is also a story laced with romance, hope, humour, sex, and street and war action. It is heartfelt and cynical, with breezy dialogue and realistic, nuanced characters. A fusion of forces and genres: past and present, war and peace, comedy and tragedy, *Eighteen* covers a lot of ground with confidence and integrity.

Eighteen – The Characters

Paul Anthony as PIP

Pip is a streetkid who is turning eighteen today. His tortured and anguished spirit percolates beneath his punky and sarcastic surface.

Brendan Fletcher as JASON ANDERS

Jason Anders is a wide-eyed, eighteen year old soldier who has been dropped in the middle of the Second World War. He is constantly and frantically conflicted between his duty and his impulse to run away.

Carly Pope as JENNY

Jenny is a sensitive, selfless young spirit who is an aspiring social worker. When it comes to dating troubled men, she has no qualms about rushing in where angels fear to tread.

Mark Hildreth as MACAULEY

Macauley is a medic who's seen so much blood and war he's developed a secret and deadly coping method. He spends the entire story with a bullet in his gut.

Thea Gill as HANNAH

Hannah is beautiful, breathless WWII entertainer who is teetering a little past her prime. She smokes, sings, and delights in giving private encores to lucky privates.

Clarence Sponagle as CLARK

Clark is a gay hustler who, between keeping a regular clientele to go-go dancing to selling videos of himself "jerkin", has created a rather comfortable life for himself. This life gets thrown upside down when he unceremoniously meets Pip.

David Beazely as JEFF

Jeff is an affable gas station attendant who is spectacularly in love with Clark. He's so consumed by his love for him, he probably hasn't realized yet this means he's gay.

Alan Cumming as FATHER CHRIS

Father Chris is a priest who chooses to pound the pavement rather than preach at a pulpit. A kindred spirit, he feeds and befriends the troubled souls of the street.

Eighteen - Selected Cast

PAUL ANTHONY as Pip

Paul is the inaugural recipient of the B.C. Entertainment Hall of Fame award for the most promising newcomer and has been lauded by both the Vancouver Sun and the Georgia Strait as *the up –and-comer to watch*. He has left his charismatic mark on many film and TV projects including: *Blade: Trinity, Premonition, Dead Like Me, Dark Angel, My Life As A Dog, Da Vinci's Inquest, Stargate SG-1, Cold Squad, The Chris Isaac Show, Jake 2.0, The Collector, Strange Frequency, The Adventures of Shirley Holmes, Guy Maddin's Hands of Idea* and the Emmy award winning mini-series *Traffic*.

Paul is a graduate of Studio 58.

BRENDAN FLETCHER as Jason Anders

One of Canada's most sought after young actors, Brendan Fletcher has worked steadily in film and television for years and was recently hand-picked by celebrated auteur Terry Gilliam to star in his new feature, *Tideland*. In 2001, he was awarded the Genie Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role, Canada's top film acting honour, for starring in *The Law of Enclosures*, directed by John Greyson and co-starring Sarah Polley.

Other career highlights include Jeremy Podeswa's *Five Senses*, Scott Smith's *rollercoaster*, and the television movies *Anatomy of a Hate Crime* and *100 Days in the Jungle*. Brendan has also enjoyed chewing up the scenery in such popcorn fare as *Freddy vs. Jason* and *Air Bud*.

CARLY POPE as Jenny

A talented and beautiful rising star, Carly first stepped into the spotlight playing Sam on the WB's hugely successful series, *Popular*. Movie credits include *Orange County, The Glass House, Snow Day*, and *Disturbing Behaviour*.

She is currently starring in the Al Pacino movie, *Two for the Money*.

ALAN CUMMING as Father Chris

Alan's film credits include, *Circle of Friends, Emma, Goldeneye, Romy and Michele's High School Reunion, Eyes Wide Shut, Titus*, the *Spy Kids* trilogy, *X2: X-Men United, Son of the Mask, Reefer Madness* and *The Anniversary Party* which, with Jennifer Jason Leigh, he wrote, directed, produced and acted in.

His theatre work includes *Cabaret* (Tony Award for Best Actor) and *Design for Living* on Broadway, *Elle* (which he also adapted) off-Broadway, and in the U.K., seasons with The Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal National Theatre and a critically acclaimed and award-winning *Hamlet* at the Donmar Warehouse.

THEA GILL as Hannah

Thea Gill has worked on many diverse projects for the stage and screen. For the last five years, she starred as Lindsay Peterson on Showtime's highest rated series *Queer as Folk*, for which she received an ACTRA Award nomination. Thea was also chosen to receive the National Leadership Award from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, which annually honours those individuals who have been champions of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered rights.

Other television roles include such series as *Bliss* for the Oxygen Network, (and for which Thea was awarded the Golden Sheaf for best Actress), *Just Cause*, *Kung Fu: the Legend Continues*, and *Due South*. She has had leading and supporting roles in numerous commercials, features, and MOW's as well, such as *Tornado Warning*, opposite Gerald McRaney, *Sightings: Heartland Ghost* with Beau Bridges and Miguel Ferrer, *Common Ground*, co-starring Brittany Murphy, Helen Shaver and written by Harvey Fierstein, and *Papertrail*.

IAN McKELLEN as the voice of Jason Anders

On Friday, February 6th, 2004, Sir Ian McKellen and *Eighteen* director Richard Bell joined forces at Fox Studios Australia in Sydney to record Pip's grandfather's war memoir. As the elderly Jason Anders, Sir Ian adds a lovely pedigree to *Eighteen*.

Sir Ian McKellen is internationally renowned as the leading British actor of his generation. His Shakespeare performances on stage and on screen are legendary. His versatility and pre-eminence in modern work as well as the classics have earned him over forty important acting awards. For over four decades, alongside his prestigious stage appearances worldwide, he has starred in scores of films, television and radio productions. His portrayal of the wizard Gandalf in Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* has received accolades from critics and filmgoers around the world, earning the Screen Actors Guild award for Best Supporting Actor, and his second nomination for the Academy Award.

Eighteen - Director's Comment

I was inspired to write *Eighteen* after my grandfather left me an audiocassette with his World War II memoirs on it. I journeyed down the cassette's length of magnetic tape and learned of young men who did extraordinary things in dangerous times. After that, I started going to Remembrance Day ceremonies more often; I began to appreciate what my granddad, and countless young men like him, did for the world I now live in.

It was also around the same time I became a bit disheartened with that world, however. I began to notice how apathetic our culture and today's youth had become. I questioned whether any of us deserved to live in this world that our granddads got blown apart for.

The idea for a story about a young person who inherits a war account and how it changes him occurred to me. For me, the perfect incarnation of the apathy I saw on a day-to-day basis was a street kid. And for the street kid to connect with his grandfather, he would need to be the very same age. The two main characters were born.

I set out to write a story and create a world for these characters. I wanted to throw open a window onto a very different universe for most audiences, that would take people below the surface of "street people," diving deeper to discover World War II in a thread that would echo over time. I also wanted to tell a story that would show gays and straights being friends in a meaningful and intimate way, a rarity in filmdom.

Eighteen is about boys standing on the edge of manhood, teetering back and forth on their heels, wondering how cold the water will be if they jump in. It is a story about masculinity, in its many and varied forms: young and old, straight and gay. The characters are young men on the brink: a street kid, a rogue soldier, a male hooker, and a gay teen looking for love in a straight world.

Eighteen simultaneously introduces you to the youth who were thrown into the chaos of battle, frightened, hysterical, and wounded, and then delivers you today's generation – a generation lost in the maelstrom of popular culture, drugs, HIV and airplanes that crash into office buildings. It's about war, and finding peace and oneself, in that war.

Richard Bell – October 1st, . 2005

Composer – Bramwell Tovey

Bramwell Tovey joined the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra as Music Director in September 2000. Since September 2002, he has also been Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg. From 1989 to 2001 he was Artistic Director of the Winnipeg Symphony where he established the WSO's New Music Festival as one of the premiere new music events in North America.

Over the 2004 summer, Maestro Tovey made his debut at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and led the New York Philharmonic in a two-week summer festival at the orchestra's Lincoln Centre home, Avery Fischer Hall. In July he appeared with the NYPO in residence in Vail, Colorado. In October 2004 he conducted the OPL's debut tour of the US and in January 2005 OPL's tour of Germany and Austria. During the 2004/05 season he also appeared with the Toronto Symphony, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Trondheim Symphony in Norway, and the New York Philharmonic.

In 2003 Bramwell won the Juno award for Best Classical Composition for his "Requiem for a Charred Skull". A new quintet commissioned by Canadian Brass, "Santa Barbara Sonata" was premiered in Santa Barbara, California in June and recorded for CB's 2004 fall release "The Magic Horn". In October 2004, Bramwell wrote the music for this film, *Eighteen* and the soundtrack was recorded by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

Bramwell Tovey holds honorary doctorates from the Universities of Manitoba and Winnipeg. In 1999 he won the Joan Chalmer's National Award for Artistic Direction of a major Canadian arts institution. In 2000 he was appointed a member of the Order of Manitoba. In January 2004 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in London, England.

Director of Photography – Kevin J. van Niekerk

Zambian born Kevin J. van Niekerk, cut his teeth in cinematography whilst based out of London, England. Kevin's award winning work has spanned continents and includes an impressive portfolio of drama, commercials, music videos, television, corporate films and title sequences.

After many years of doing it the hard way, (low budgets / very excited directors) Kevin has established a reputation as a film professional who knows his stuff and one who is always able to bring something that bit special to a project.

He has brought his unique vision and crisp professionalism to over 40 music videos, from burgeoning indie garage bands to the juggernauts of the music world. A selection of his live concert work include *Andrea Bocelli: Live from Tuscany*, *Luther Vandross: Live at the Royal Albert Hall*, *Blur: Live from Leeds*, *Jamiroquai at The Brixton Academy* and the *25th Anniversary of Deep Purple* from The Birmingham NEC. His efficiency and skill have made him an in-demand commercial cinematographer with clients that include: HBO Showtime USA, CNN Asia, the BBC (Radio, America, News, & News 24), British Telecom, L'Oreal, Colgate, Cincinnati Bell, Dr. Martens, Virgin and The Government of India.

His television work spans all genres from documentaries to drama and includes the pilot *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* shot at the legendary Pinewood Studios and more recently, 2nd Unit DP work for the multi Emmy award winning show *The West Wing*.

In 1999, Kevin was a guest on the Canadian television show *Urban Rush* when he shared the couch with fledgling Vancouver filmmaker Richard Bell. Richard was eagerly promoting his \$545 movie *Two Brothers* and Kevin had just returned from India filming their national project to celebrate the 50th Year of Independence. Rather intrigued by Richard's somewhat "lower budget approach", Kevin attended the screening of *Two Brothers*, and much to his surprise, became

instantly captivated by it. Approaching Richard after the screening Kevin said, point blank, "That was a brilliant movie, but it looked like crap. I'm shooting your next one".

Years later, after trials, tribulations and false starts on *Eighteen*, Kevin and Richard finally came together; Kevin making good on his promise. Kevin's North American movie debut with *Eighteen* shows once again that a deft touch, an unwavering attention to detail and a driving passion really can add a special touch to a project.

Director & Writer – Richard Bell

Not many directors have had the experience of directing two-time Oscar nominee Sir Ian McKellen and Tony Award winner Alan Cumming in a movie, especially before turning thirty.

Enter Richard Bell. With his tenacity and charm, not to mention his stunning script, Richard not only assembled McKellen and Cumming, but Canadian stars Brendan Fletcher, Carly Pope and Thea Gill for the film *Eighteen*. An encounter with Vancouver Symphony director Bramwell Tovey convinced the maestro to compose *Eighteen's* soundtrack, and soon thereafter he and VSO president Jeff Alexander brought the entire symphony onboard.

Richard's talents as a story-teller have been evident for many years. From 1998 to 2000, Richard wrote, filmed and directed *Two Brothers*, a movie he shot with a borrowed video camera for a paltry 545.00 dollars. In the two years that followed, Richard adventured through many cities in the United States, Europe, and Australia, promoting it and his self at film festivals. The "little movie that could" garnered substantial media attention and critical acclaim – even a cult following.

Richard originally trained as an actor and playwright at Studio 58, the only conservatory-style theatre training program in Western Canada. This is where Richard gained solid insight into the actor's process, a gift that makes him a kindred spirit to the actors with whom he collaborates.

Richard is currently working on a bristling new drama called *Beautiful Ugly*, as well as an adaptation of a famous masterwork. He continues to be mentored by L.A. based scribe Donald Martin, a two time Genie Award winner.