

**Inflo Films
in association with
Canova Media**

Presents

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

Written & Directed by Dusty Mancinelli

Starring

Jim Annan
Joanna Douglas

(2012, 16 mins, Canada)

Distribution

Harry Cherniak
Inflo Films
Tel: 416-845-1234
E-mail: harry@inflofilms.com
www.inflofilms.com

Publicity

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

High res photos may be downloaded from:
www.inflofilms.com/bhs_photos.html

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

LOGLINE

After a traumatic breakup, Russ Kaufman discovers that hearts really can break when he is diagnosed with a rare disease called Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy, also known as Broken Heart Syndrome. Russ desperately tries to find a cure that will mend his broken heart before it's too late.

SYNOPSIS

Russ Kaufman (Jim Annan) lives a very stable and comfortable life teaching music to a group of young, precocious kids. Russ is finally ready to tie the knot, and plans to propose to his girlfriend, Carol (Joanna Douglas), who he is madly in love with. But before Russ gets a chance to get down on one knee, Carol unexpectedly confesses that she's unhappy and is leaving him. This literally breaks Russ's heart. His comfortable, stable world suddenly comes crashing down and everything in his life feels like it's falling apart. It's not long before Russ is diagnosed with a rare, life threatening disease called Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy, also known as Broken Heart Syndrome. While trying to cope with his severe pain and distress, Russ desperately struggles to find a cure that will mend his broken heart before it's too late.

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Can the end of a relationship literally break your heart? Somewhat surprisingly, it actually can! This rare disease, known as Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy, forms the basis of **Broken Heart Syndrome**.

For quite a while I've been interested in writing a film about love and heartbreak – one that would scrutinize the overly rosy view that is often represented on screen and in popular culture – but I just never felt like I had the right angle. All of that changed though when I came across an unusual article that mentioned Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy. The article described the unbelievable fact that severe cases of emotional trauma and distress can actually cause a potentially deadly bulging and weakening of the heart. Looking into it more, I found out that, not surprisingly, difficult break-ups are considered to be one of the main causes of the disease. In fact, it's often referred to by the non-medical name of Broken Heart Syndrome or BHS. With this information in hand, I knew that I had my entryway and was ready to begin writing.

My focus was to use the medical condition as a device to explore romance and unrequited love. Along the way, I decided that I wanted to tell the story completely from Russ's perspective. The audience goes along for the ride as Russ experiences his symptoms and the strange side effects of his experimental medication. With this in mind, it felt like a natural progression to try and create a very stylized and quirky world for this story to unfold in. With that said though, I made sure to keep the medical condition as grounded in reality as possible, using Producer Harry Cherniak's brother, Dr. Bill Cherniak, as a resource both while writing and during production.

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

PRODUCTION NOTES

Though financing an independent film is never an easy task, **Broken Heart Syndrome** benefited from the generous support of some of Canada's leading arts agencies. Writer, director and producer Dusty Mancinelli received funding support from the National Film Board of Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council. As well, at only the script stage, **Broken Heart Syndrome** was licensed to the CBC to air on the main network following the film's Canadian festival run. As with most short filmmakers though, the producers were always short on cash and faced many challenges. "From having to find a group of young children who could sing, to planning all of the practical special effects and finding unique and generally expensive locations such as a hospital, doctor's office, school and CT scan facility, making **Broken Heart Syndrome** was definitely an adventure," explains Mancinelli. "Also," adds Producer Harry Cherniak, "funnily enough, we happened to randomly schedule our one week of filming to overlap with Valentines' Day".

Shooting in a live surgery wing...

For a short film, **Broken Heart Syndrome's** complicated location list is unusual. As a result, the filmmakers needed to be quite resourceful and persistent. "Without a doubt, the most challenging location to find was the hospital and operating room", says Mancinelli. "This location was an integral part of the story, and so locating the right setting for the hospital – one that would convey the authenticity required – was a major concern for us".

With both a limited budget and high expectations, the filmmakers had to ask themselves some tough questions. "Were we going to build a hospital set, or were we going to seek out real locations? Both scenarios posed huge problems for us. Building a set was costly, and at the same time, would have created challenges with respect to being able to portray the realism and authenticity we were aiming for", explains Mancinelli. Securing real locations was proving to be equally as difficult, with the management of most hospitals conveying fear that a large film crew would be disruptive and inconvenient and the cheapest willing hospital quoting a \$20,000 per day price tag. It was a very tough sell.

"By a stroke of luck, and just in the nick of time, we finally located a warm and welcoming medical community approximately 150 km away from Toronto in Simcoe, Ontario" explains producer, Harry Cherniak. "At Norfolk General Hospital the excitement of a film shoot resonated with the upper management, and after a couple lengthy meetings, we finally broke some ground", says producer S. Brent Martin. The hospital generously provided the production with full access to shoot in their large surgery wing, all while it was still open and running. "We were told that if a real patient came in for emergency surgery we would have to clear

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

the halls, conceal our props and get out of the way. We never imagined it would actually happen, but sure enough, mid-way through our shoot day it actually did", explains Cherniak. "At one point, during a quick re-light, our actor playing the Surgeon in the film wandered down the surgery corridor, covered in fake blood. The administrative rep who was supervising us rushed up to him and pulled him aside – not wanting to frighten actual patients", recalls Mancinelli. In the end, Norfolk General Hospital delivered exactly the authenticity the filmmakers were looking for!

Making a heart beat...

It was obvious from the beginning that **Broken Heart Syndrome** was going to require a heavy dose of special effects. As Mancinelli puts it, "it always feels more genuine to refrain from using CGI and inorganic elements into the filmmaking process". So, with this in mind, the **Broken Heart Syndrome** team put together a plan to create the special effects required using practical materials and synthetic models.

Long time collaborator and York film school colleague Chris Nash was brought on to create all the in-body and surgery effects. As explained by Martin, "our goal was to execute our special effects live, while the camera was rolling". "This is of course always a daunting task as this plan leaves very little room for error. We were always working against the clock," stresses Mancinelli. In fact, the two heart models took Chris Nash nearly 6 months to complete. The result is just what the filmmakers wanted - something stylized and textured, yet real.

Working with kids – especially when they need to sing!

Though Mancinelli has had plenty of experience working with children (the lead of his last short, *Pathways*, was a child), **Broken Heart Syndrome** presented a new challenge: he would need to get them to sing and chant in unison. Mancinelli explains, "when writing the script, I was completely focused on what I wanted to see on screen – it didn't even occur to me how much preparation would be required in advance of filming!"

After countless auditions, the filmmakers were finally able to cast the roles, but they still hadn't figured out how they would conduct the rehearsals. Though musically inclined, none of the filmmakers had the experience required or knew of anyone who they could call on. Thankfully, the filmmakers got lucky and stumbled upon help – from the mother of one of the young actors. As Dusty explains, "During my first rehearsal with Katherine Forrester, who plays Robin, her mother Juliet casually mentioned that she was an experienced vocal coach and composer. By the end of the rehearsal she was on board to be our new vocal coach!" All the songs were pre-scored by the composer, Tim Alberts, and after extensive rehearsals, the songs were recorded in a studio weeks before principle photography actually started.

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

THE PRODUCTION COMPANIES

Inflo Films

Founded in 2004 by partners Harry Cherniak and Dusty Mancinelli, Inflo Films is a Toronto-based independent film production company. Its goal is to make thought provoking, engaging and commercially successful films. The filmmakers see short films as an exciting platform from which they can develop their craft as filmmakers, build strong relationships within the film industry and prepare themselves to create well-crafted feature length films.

In 2006, Inflo produced the well-received short comedy *Death to Charlie!*, which was picked up by Ouat! Media. In 2007, it released its next short, the quirky satire *P.U.R.E.*, which has won several awards and has played at more than a dozen film festivals across the U.S. and Canada including the Cinéfest Sudbury International Film Festival, the Whistler Film Festival and the Washington DC Independent Film Festival. In 2009, Inflo's short film *Soap* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, screened at the Palm Springs International ShortFest and the LA Short Fest and was sold to the CBC. Inflo's short drama, *Pathways*, premiered at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival.

Canova Media

Canova Media is an award-winning entertainment production company specializing in scripted, documentary and marketing media content. With a keen eye for edgy, thought provoking and meaningful stories, Canova Media produces commercially viable entertainment for screens of all sizes, and clients of all industries.

Canova Media was founded by S. Brent Martin while he was studying at the American Film Institute (AFI) Conservatory in Los Angeles. In 2011, Martin was the recipient of a Student Emmy Award for his AFI thesis film *Clear Blue*, which was written and directed by Lindsay MacKay. As both a producer and director, Martin's work has screened at film festivals around the world.

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

THE FILMMAKERS

Dusty Mancinelli | Writer, Director, Producer

Dusty Mancinelli is a Toronto-based writer, director and producer. In 2007, Dusty's first short film, *P.U.R.E.*, won the award for Best Narrative at the Student Shorts Film Festival in Toronto. In 2009, Dusty wrote and directed the short film *Soap*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and aired nationally on the CBC. In 2011, he wrote, directed and produced the short film *Pathways*, which had its world premiere at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival. During the festival, Dusty was selected to participate in Telefilm Canada's Talent to Watch Not Short on Talent panel discussion. *Pathways* went on to screen at festivals across Canada including the Cinéfest Sudbury International Film Festival, Whistler International Film Festival and the Victoria Film Festival.

In addition to making his own films, Dusty was the second unit director on Dilip Mehta's *Cooking with Stella*, which was shot in New Delhi, India and premiered as a Gala Presentation at the 2009 Toronto International Film Festival. When not making films, Dusty has continued to build his reputation as a photographer. In addition to running his own photoblog, Dusty did all of the promotional stills and behind the scenes footage for Deepa Mehta's 2008 film, *Heaven on Earth* and her current feature film adaptation of Salman Rushdie's Booker prize-winning novel *Midnight's Children*. Dusty is currently working as a freelancer for Hamilton-Mehta Productions Inc., a Canadian production company founded by Producer David Hamilton and Academy Award nominated Director Deepa Mehta. Dusty holds an Honours BFA with Distinction in Film Production from York University.

Harry Cherniak | Producer

Harry Cherniak is a Toronto-based producer and corporate lawyer. While Cherniak has spent most of his days and nights over the past year working as an associate in the corporate law department of one of Canada's leading law firms, he has happily filled the rest of his time (vacation and otherwise!) producing ***Broken Heart Syndrome***.

In addition to producing Inflo Film's shorts, over the past few years Cherniak has worked as a publicist with Star PR and in Los Angeles and Toronto as an assistant and then business affairs Consultant to Nicholas Tabarrok, President of Darius Films (*Defendor*, *Weirdsville*).

Cherniak holds a Juris Doctorate from the University of Toronto, an MSc with Distinction from the London School of Economics and a BA in Honours Business Administration with Distinction from the University of Western Ontario's Richard Ivey School of Business.

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

S. Brent Martin | Producer

S. Brent Martin is a graduate of the American Film Institute Conservatory, where his AFI thesis film, *Clear Blue*, received a Student Emmy Award from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in recognition of its achievements in filmmaking. *Clear Blue* was jury selected to screen at the annual AFI Thesis Showcase and had its North American premiere at SXSW. The film recently completed a fruitful run on the global festival circuit after winning several Best of Fest awards and other noteworthy honours.

Originally from Calgary, Alberta, Martin moved east to attend Toronto's York University Film and Video Production Program. There he directed and produced the documentary *My Grandfather's Voice*, which screened at film festivals across Canada, and won the Best Documentary Awards at both Cinesiege and the Winnipeg International Film Festival. While at York University, Martin also produced two award winning short dramas, *Viva Jopo* and *Souvenirs from Asia*. After graduating from York University, Martin moved to Vancouver, where he worked as the assistant to producer, William Vince, founder of Infinity Features (*Saved*, *Capote*, *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*).

Now based out of Toronto, Martin is has recently launched his production company Canova Media, under which he is developing several media projects.

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

THE LEAD CAST

Jim Annan | Russ Kaufman

Jim Annan, who has been nominated for fourteen Canadian Comedy Awards for writing and performing, is an alumnus of the University of Windsor and The Second City Theatre Toronto. While at Second City, Annan wrote and performed in four revues, including the Canadian Comedy Award winning *Facebook Of Revelations* and the Dora Award Nominated *Bird Flu Over The Cuckoos Nest* and *Tazed And Confused*.

On television, Annan is the voice of "Peter Puck" for CBC's *Hockey Night In Canada*. His other television and film credits include: *Dan For Mayor*, *Covert Affairs*, *The Rick Mercer Report*, *The Ron James Show*, *The Jon Dore Show*, *Billable Hours*, *Textuality*, *Unrivaled*, *Puck Hogs*, *Unlucky*, and *Tommy* (selected for TIFF Kids 2012).

Annan is also one third of the comedy troupe Falcon Powder, named Best Of The Fest at the 2010 and 2011 Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival, and the 2012 Los Angeles Comedy Festival and nominated for Best Sketch Troupe at the Canadian Comedy Awards in 2011 and 2012.

Joanna Douglas | Carol

Douglas is best known to audiences for her portrayal of "Samantha" in the CBC/E4 (UK)/SoapNet (USA) television series *Being Erica*. Other television credits include the recurring role of "Shell Jenkins" in ABC's *Happy Town* as well as guest starring roles on *Suits* (USA Network), *Saving Hope* (NBC/CTV), *Warehouse 13* (Syfy), *Perception* (TNT), *Rookie Blue* (ABC/Global), *Flashpoint* (CBS/CTV), *Republic of Doyle* (CBC), *Heartland* (CBC) and *The Border* (CBC) and leading roles in the television movies *Taking A Chance on Love* (Hallmark) and *All The Good Ones Are Married* (Lifetime). On the big screen, Joanna can be seen in *Saw VII*, *The Four Horsemen*, *St Roz*, *New Year* and, most recently, *Hello October*.

Joanna has enjoyed playing such roles on stage as "Libby" in *Opening Night* (Theatre Aquarius), "Judy" in *A Perfect Wedding* (The Victoria Playhouse Theatre), "Jillian" in Solar Stage's *Jillian Jiggs Tells Stories*, an array of characters in *Thirteen Hands* (Hart House Theatre), "Marjorie Pinchwife" in *The Country Wife*, as well as "Bianca" in *Woman Beware Woman* (Theatre Erindale). She is a Graduate of the University of Toronto and Sheridan College's joint Theatre and Drama Studies program.

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

CAST

Russ Jim Annan
Carol Joanna Douglas
Doctor Christian Lloyd
Surgeon Allen Stewart-Coates
Principal Richard Waugh
Robin Katherine Forrester
Choir Kid #1 Alexa Missios
Choir Kid #2 Zoe Fraser
Choir Kid #3 Avery Kadish
Choir Kid #4 SamBea Cochrane
Choir Kid #5 Jeni Ross
Choir Kid #6 Amariah Faulkner
Choir Kid #7 Arcadia Kendal
Choir Kid #8 Brooke Pastuch
Lover Andrew Church
Nurse #1 Cat McCormick
Nurse #2 Kathleen Lamothe
Nurse #3 Sheena Kamal
Little Boy Devan Cohen
Little Girl Vanessa Coelho

CREW

Writer, Director, Producer Dusty Mancinelli
Producer Harry Cherniak
Producer S. Brent Martin
Director of Photography Maya Bankovic
Production Designer Jeannette Nguyen
Editor Darby MacInnis
Composer Tim Alberts
Sound Designer Justin Long-Him Shum
Production Manager Chris Nash
1st Assistant Director Matt Greyson
2nd Assistant Director Cameron Tisi
3rd AD (Daily) Jenna Elzin
Steadicam Operator Mike Heathcote
1st Assistant Camera Alex Leung
2nd Assistant Camera Chris Reilly
2nd AC (Daily) Anagha Kulkarni
DMT/Continuity Marci Mancinelli
Storyboard Artist Deena Pagliarello

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

Stills Photographers	Jacklyn Atlas Erin Simkin
EPK Videographer	Koorosh Zarezadeh
Art Director	Yim Hung Kung
Set Dressers	Robin Love Maggy Monceaux Mike Ward
Costume Designer	Stephanie Atkinson
Key Makeup & Hair	Trason Fernandes
Makeup & Hair Assistant	Alexandra Smith
Special Effects	Chris Nash
Casting	John Buchan, CSA Jason Knight, CSA
Background Casting	Nancy Notting Harrison
Vocal Coach	Juliet Forrester
Gaffer	Dan Whitton
Electric	Jason Naylor
Electric (Daily)	Cody Eason
Key Grip	Justin Yaroski
Grip (Daily)	Tex Entsch
Medical Consultant	Bill Cherniak, MD
Sound Recordist/Boom Operator	Adam Clark
Boom Operator (Daily)	Matt Dailey
Foley Artist	Alex Adams
Cellist	Teimour Sadykhov
Visual Effects	Miguel Castillo
Re-Recording Mixer	Matt Chan
Mix Facility	Theatre D Digital at the Royal
Score Recorded at	Limehouse Sound
Choir Sound Engineers	Harry Knazan Armen Bazarian
Colorist	Conor Fisher
Production Assistants	Spencer Hahn Daniel Jourdan Carly Stone
Craft Services	Jill Cherniak Sue Farkas
Catering	Sher's 5 Star Catering Mylar & Loreta's