





"Chamandy is a gifted young filmmaker who seems poised to become an intriguing voice in contemporary cinema, and this film proves to be an audacious feature-length debut that will stand him in good stead going forward, particularly if this kind of simple, compassionate storytelling becomes a regular component of his future works."

-International Cinephile Society

"Beautiful and impactful, and about a subject that is simultaneously intimidating and universal."

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## Allen Sunshine Allen Sunshine



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"An exceptional cinematic effort crafted by a remarkably talented emerging filmmaker"

-TRT First Cut + Award Jury

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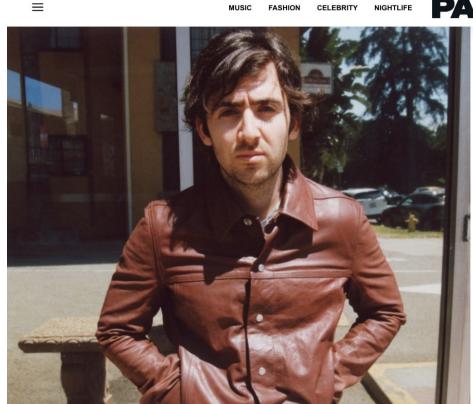
#### Werner Herzog Honors Rising Filmmaker Harley Chamandy, Whom He Compares to a Young Kiarostami or Korine

The Werner Herzog Foundation gave Canadian filmmaker Harley Chamandy the 2024 Werner Herzog Film Prize for his feature "Allen Sunshine."

#### BY RYAN LATTANZIO 🕃

DECEMBER 18, 2024 8:39 AM





# **Harley Chamandy Questions Reality With 'Allen** Sunshine'

HOME > FILM/TV > HARLEY CHAMANDY

BY IVAN GUZMAN

# Harley Chamandy Will Not Let Cinema Die



June 24, 2024

There's an evocative synergy that film shares with music, and Harley Chamandy has been trying to properly encapsulate that feeling for all his life. The 24-year-old Montreal-born filmmaker straddles an innate attachment to both mediums. At 17, he was the youngest invitee of Werner Herzog's Black Factory Cinema Workshop in Cuba, working under the tutelage of an esteemed pioneer, cutting his teeth with 54 other auteurs-intraining. With a healthy catalog of wistful short films by age 22, Chamandy crafted his debut feature film, Allen Sunshine, across two weeks in southeastern Quebec. Through the musical recordings of its eponymous protagonist, Allen Sunshine is a story of friendship in the wake of loss, using its ambient score as a device for emotional rumination.

By Olivier Lafontant
Photo by Jetro Emilcar



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Jul 19, 2024 5:46am PT

#### 'Allen Sunshine,' About Grieving Music Mogul, Wins Werner Herzog Film Award (EXCLUSIVE)

By Naman Ramachandran ~













Chasseurs Films/Mother & Son Films





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**Allen Sunshine** (Canada, USA), directed by Harley Chamandy and produced by Chantal Chamandy.

**Jury statement:** "For an exceptional cinematic effort crafted by a remarkably talented emerging filmmaker, showcasing a sensitive portrayal of genuine friendship, the journey towards solitude following loss, and developing a minimalist yet deeply impactful approach to storytelling and cinematography."



1

#### The Werner Herzog Film Award 2024 goes to Harley Chamandy for his film ALLEN SUNSHINE

The Werner Herzog Film Award, an annual award endowed with a sum of €5,000, can go to a feature film, a documentary, a filmmaker, an actor, or anyone working in the art of cinema. It will be given to special achievements in innovation, courage, and vision. The award is open to citizens of all countries. There is no application procedure, and no competition.

The Werner Herzog Foundation Award 2024 goes to

Harley Chamandy for his film ALLEN SUNSHINE



Shooting on 16mm, ALLEN SUNSHINE by young Canadian filmmaker Harley Chamandy offers a deeply personal and emotional journey with poignant images and sounds. The directorial debut of the Montreal-born and New York-based filmmaker beautifully captures the solitude of a man who lost his family, now living in his remote cabin, and his friendship with two young boys. Using music as a powerful tool to explore themes of redemption, grief, and emotional attachment.



#### Werner Herzog on the bestowal of the award:

"The Werner Herzog Film Award for 2024 goes to Harley Chamandy for his film ALLEN SUNSHINE. One of the Foundation's missions is to support emerging talents, and it is remarkable that Harley Chamandy participated in my first young filmmakers' workshop in Cuba when he was just 17 years old. At 21, he made his subtle, award-winning film.

ALLEN SUNSHINE tells the story of a former music mogul who retreats to a secluded lakeside house to cope with the suicide of his famous wife. He processes his grief by composing atmospheric electronic music and forms an unexpected friendship with two boys he meets while fishing at the lake. Throughout his stages of grief, Allen encounters various people who remind him of what he has lost and forgotten, and what he hopes to rediscover.

The criteria for the award from my foundation are always innovation, courage, and initiative, and Harley Chamandy has demonstrated all of these. He already possesses a unique voice. Congratulations to him."

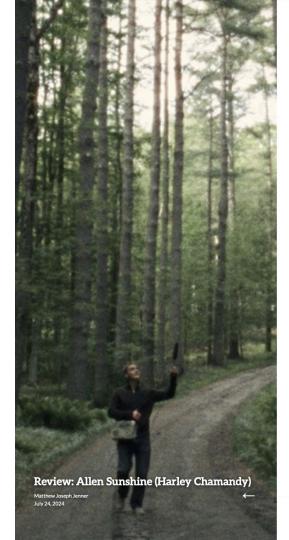
The award ceremony is going to take place on

Friday, December 6, 2024 at 7 pm

at the Munich Cinematheque (Filmmuseum München), St.-Jakobs-Platz 1

The ceremony is followed by the screening of the award winning film and a live discussion between the Harley Chamandy and Werner Herzog.

Limited ticket sales.



# international cinephile society

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"Beautiful and impactful, and about a subject that is simultaneously intimidating and universal."



There isn't one way to grieve that is considered more effective than others. We all mourn in our own way, and coming to terms with the loss of a loved one can be a daunting process that often feels like we are wandering aimlessly through life, without any sense of guidance outside of the well-wishes of those who care but are still not able to offer the psychological and emotional balan we need in those instances. This is something that the protagonist of Allen Surshine, the beautiful and heart-wrenching directorial debut of Harley Chamandy, has to endure after the death of his wife. Relocating to a lakeside home in a pastoral region of Canada, he attempts to process this immense loss on his own but is soon drawn into the live is of two young boys who live nearly. Neither of them can comprehend the scope of what the protagonist is facing, but instead they provide the necessary distraction that ultimately proves to be just what he required on his path towards revy. Beautiful and impactful, and about a subject that is simultaneously intimidating and universal. Allen Surshine is a tremendous film that takes on many different ideas, weaving them together to create a poignant examination of grief and how it can lead us down various paths that we never imagende well traverse, but with hut now to be will also our courser towards an associated with the second of the protagonal protection.

At first, Allen Sunshine seems to be telling two parallel stories, since its first act focuses on slightly separate narratives – one about the titular character as he navigates the aftermath of losing his wife, who was both his personal and professional companion and the person who guided his entire life by being his artistic immuse; the other about to boy, visiting the same region for the various misadventures as they begin to examine the world that surrounds them. The stories eventually come together, and we realize that this is a film about a trio of characters who are all facing various challenges and confronted with major emotional obstacles, which can be overcome only by attempting to comprehend some of life's most peculiar mysteries. Chamandy combines a story of grief with a coning-of-age narrative, two very common storylines that are given further meaning through this nunanced, measured examination of how they eximilar feelings of confusion in those experiencing than. The director makes some fascinating observations about these two experiences that are mostly considered universal, at least at their core, and which will resonate with many viewers who have felt as adrift and lost as these characters.

Growing up and grieving loss are common experiences that are rarely viewed in similar terms, yet come together in unexpected primary may be throughout this film. Allen Sunshine proves to be a much more layered exploration of these themse than we may have anticipated, particularly in how. Chammandy draws fasticantiag and insightful correlations between them and finds ways to put them in fidalogue with once another, creating a unique and complex narrative. Despite the intense subject matter, the director is entirely aware of how to look at these ideas without relying on predictable patterns or the tropes that we would expect to accompany such a film. This is a film in which the loud proclamations are mostly inconsequential, while the intricate minutiae carry the most meaning since it's sometimes the silences that resound with the most force. It is reminiscent of a particular kind of gentle, easy-going character drama produced in the 1970s, where we were presented with stream-of-consciousness narratives that examined the intricate details and used them to construct a rich, vivid tapestry of the human condition. Chamandy achieves this both in terms of the existing and the country from the visual aesthetic (setting the entire film in a beautiful corner of the country, focusing on capturing the natural beautiful to other of the country, focusing on capturing the natural beautiful, focusing on subtle emotions, which are kept simple. A film Resimplement of the site may minimalistic, focusing on subtle emotions with a gentle sense of humanity that breaks the monotony and even softens the intense emotional blows that occur throughout the film, making it a tender, genuinely moving drama with moments of extraordinary compassion.

There are many elements of Allen Sunshine that are worth appreciating – it is anchored by a trio of exceptional performances. Wincent Leclers is absolutely incredible as the titular character, portraying his grief in a way that feeds earnest and complex, rather than simply being a bundle of predictable tics that we usually associate with the sulfile Promotine follow, and Liam Quiring. Nichind prove to be remarkable young talents, portraying his happy-go-lucky companions who represent the welcome invasions that those experiencing periods of deliberate isolation secretly crave. We follow him as he goes on a journey of healing, in which he discovers that ill it is full of unexpected surprises, and that rather than avoiding them they should be embraced as part of the process. This is not a particularly complex film in terms of its ideology or execution, since it makes its intentions clear from the start and doesn't waver from its firm commitment to constructing a compelling character study that will be widely resonant. The quiet, meditative tone prevents any heavy-handed emotions from encroaching on this tender, pensive exploration of the mourning process. Ultimately, Alien Sunshine is a film focused on exploring the beautiful poetry of everydul [ife. a quieth human elegication of grief and how it is not all near process. Chamadhy is a gifted young filmmaker who seplosed to become an intriguing voice in contemporary cinema, and this film proves to be an audacious feature-length debut that will stand him in good stead going forward, particularly if this kind of simple, compassionate storytelling becomes a regular component of his future works.



This entry was posted in Reviews and tagged Allen Sunshine, Harley Chamandy, Liam Quiring-Nkindi, Miles Phoenix Foley, Vincent Leclerc. Bookmark the permalink.

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INTERVIEW

# Harley Chamandy by Addis Goldman

A debut feature film revels in faith and small moments.

NOVEMBER 8, 2024



Still from Harley Chamandy, Allen Sunshine, 2024. Courtesy of Mother and Son Films.



Harley Chamandy's debut feature film, *Allen Sunshine*, is about an ex–music producer on the path to renewal in the wake of tragedy. The film involves children and dogs, ritual and romance, blueberry pie and fireworks. It is as much about grief as it is about faith. The director believes in God, and it shows. At twenty-five years old, Chamandy may have much to learn about life, but he knows what he wants out of it. *Allen Sunshine*, made when he was twenty-two, won the First Cut+ TRT Award at the 57th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, premiered at the 41st Munich International Film Festival, and received the 2024 Werner Herzog Film Award, which has been previously awarded to Academy Award–winners Chloé Zhao and Asghar Farhadi. Chamandy "already possesses a unique voice," according to the legendary German auteur; when Werner speaks, we listen. On a brick Saturday in Union Square Park in New York City, Lepoko with Chamandy.





Above The Fold

# Harley Chamandy's 'Allen Sunshine' is a meditation on the quiet beauty of nature

Read time 7 minutes





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Harley Chamandy on Allen Sunshine, Shooting on 16mm, and Finding Inspiration **Outside of Cinema** C.J. Prince July 1, 2024

At a lakeside cottage, Allen Sunshine (Vincent Leclerc) keeps to himself. He goes out on his boat, walks his dog, and wanders the surrounding forest with a tape recorder capturing the sounds of nature, which he then mixes into songs with different analog synthesizers. We soon learn that Allen is a music mogul mourning the death of his wife, a famous singer whose career he helped launch. But Allen's time alone is far from peaceful. He's full of guilt and rage over his wife's passing, rejecting the fame and fast-paced life of success in the industry to find solace in the quiet luxury of his cottage and home studio.

Allen Sunshine, the directorial debut of Montreal-born and New York-based filmmaker Harley Chamandy, observes its title character's journey to acceptance after loss through the help of several neighbors, including two children and a local delivery man. The film has a modest appearance, with its minimal plot allowing Allen's feelings to be conveyed through mood and setting. Much of Allen Sunshine amounts to watching the generosity of others, and how basic acts of kindness and connection can change someone's



7 Trending



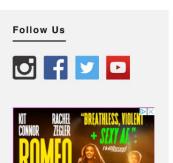


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Directed with a sense of tranquil serenity and grounded maturity one might be accustomed to finding in the work of a seasoned director, *Allen Sunshine* is, quite remarkably, the debut feature of 25-year-old Harley Chamandy. The Montreal-born, New York-based filmmaker received the 2024 Werner Herzog Film Prize for his feature following its Munich Film Festival premiere earlier this year. Having participated in Herzog's workshop as a 17-year-old, Chamandy's shared affinity with the legendary German director for the natural world is quite apparent. Shot on 16mm by Kenny Suleimanagich, who brings a painterly touch in capturing the woodland landscape, *Allen Sunshine* is an affecting, understated look at picking up a life destroyed, and finding a connection with the people that can help put the pieces back together.

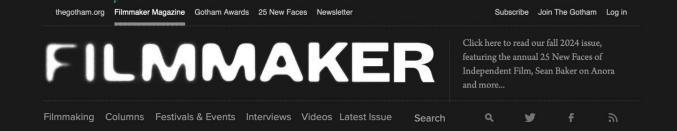
Still finding his emotional footing after the sudden death of his wife Eloise, a world-renowned musician whose career he had a hand in launching, Allen (Vincent Leclerc) is settling into life at his lakeside cottage. Leaving behind his accomplished yet creatively unsatisfying career as a seasoned music



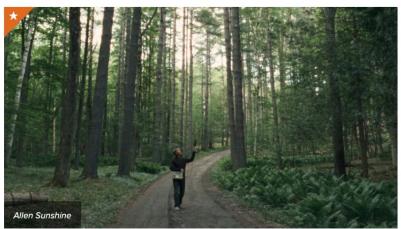


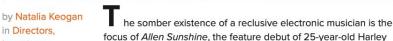
# Harley Chamandy "Allen Sunshine" is an ode to optimism in a time of anxiety





# "It's Punk Rock to Be Hopeful These Days": Harley Chamandy on His Self-Distributed Feature Debut Allen Sunshine







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# Brownstein: Werner Herzog shines a light on young Montreal director



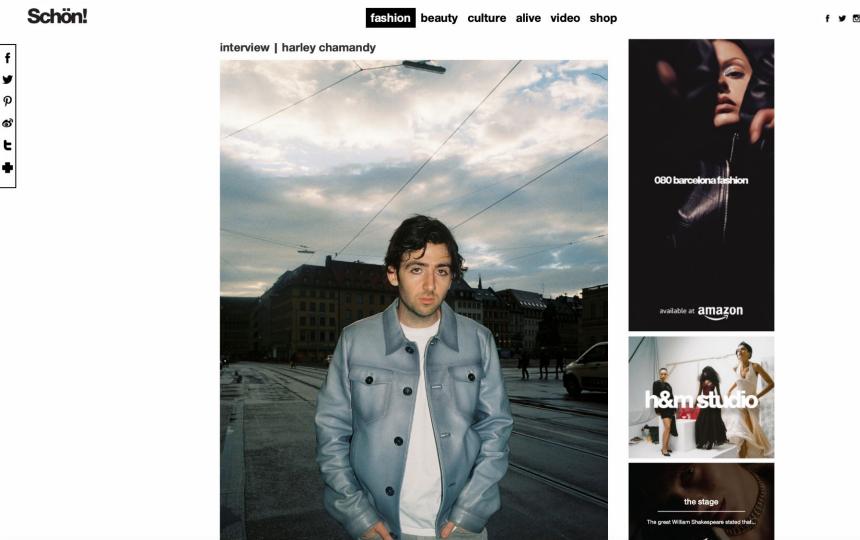
Harley Chamandy captured the iconic German filmmaker's attention with the poignant Allen Sunshine, made on a shoestring budget in the Eastern Townships.

Bill Brownstein · Montreal Gazette

Published Nov 12, 2024 · Last updated 2 days ago · 4 minute read

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#### SCREENDAILY







In addition, there will be two world premieres of films by filmmakers from Canada, the focus country at this year's CineCoPro conference being held during MIFF from July 1-4. Harley Chamandy will present his debut feature *Allen Sunshine* starring Vincent Leclerc, as a musician who retreats to a remote cabin to mourn a tragic loss until an unexpected encounter ends his isolation and gives him a fresh outlook on life.

Allen Sunshine was produced by Chantal Chamandy of New York-based Mother and Son Films with Laurent Allaire of Canada's Chasseur Films, the film won the First Cut+ Works in Progress TRT award at Karlovy Vary's Eastern Promises industry section last year.

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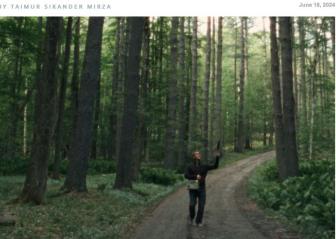
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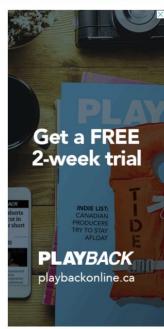




#### Allen Sunshine to world premiere at Munich fest



Among the Canadian titles also making their world premiere are Jamie Kastner's doc The Spoils and a Canada-Germany copro doc.





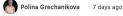
HOME FILM FESTIVALS ➤ INTERVIEWS SPOTLIGHT ➤ 2024 FILM FESTIVAL DATES



# Home / Filmfest München / Filmfest München 2024 / Filmfest München 2024: Allen Sunshine (by Harley Chamandy) | Review

Filmfest München 2024

## Filmfest München 2024: Allen Sunshine (by Harley Chamandy) | Review













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Where To Submit Your **Experimental Film?** O July 4, 2022

Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal

21 nov -1 déc . 2024 Montreal International Documentary Festival Harley Chamandy's film invites audiences into the secluded world of Allen Sunshine, a renowned music mogul who, following the loss of his wife, seeks solace on the tranquil shores of a lakeside retreat. Amidst the rhythms of nature and the unexpected friendships with locals and teenagers, Allen discovers renewed purpose and unexpected

Allen Sunshine, the splendid debut film by the young director Harley Chamandy, invites viewers into a world where every rustle of leaves and raindrop isn't just background noise but a key to the protagonist's inner world. Vincent Leclerc portrays Allen Sunshine, a renowned music mogul living a secluded life on the lake's edge, accompanied only by his faithful dog and a tape recorder capturing the sounds of nature, which inspire his musical compositions.

At the heart of the film is Allen's internal conflict as he seeks solace following the tragic loss of his wife, a famous singer. He listens to her voice on old cassette tapes, deepening into memories each day, surrounded by the tranquility of nature. Fishing on the lake, bathing in cool river waters, and taking long walks along forest paths not only help him come to terms with his loss but also infuse his life with renewed purpose. Unexpected friendships with local residents play a crucial role in Allen's life. One neighbor regularly brings fresh produce, offers advice, and surprises him on his birthday with his wife's homemade berry pie recipe. These simple acts of kindness become a source of joy and comfort for Allen.

Particularly significant are the unexpected friendships Allen forms with two teenage boys in the neighborhood. They forge an unusual bond, spending time together playing games, fishing, biking, and cooking tacos using Allen's late wife's recipe. These moments of simple joy become pivotal for Allen, reinforcing his belief that true happiness lies in the small things we often take

Allen Sunshine is more than just a drama about loss and loneliness; it unveils the deep inner world of a man who finds solace in life's simple pleasures and the support he receives from others. It is a cinematic exploration of nature, tranquility, and the possibility of finding happiness in solitude, thanks to the understanding and kindness of fellow human beings. Harley Chamandy has crafted not just a film but an exploration of human emotions and inner life that resonates deeply, prompting reflection on the importance of simple joys and kindness in everyone's lives.



Allen Sunshine (Dir. Harley Chamandy, Canada, USA, 2024)

Our writer Deline Creekenikova was on the around at the 41st Munich



HOME / FILM / NEWS

## Munich International Film Festival Sets Trio Of **World Premieres: Harley Chamandy's 'Allen Sunshine', Jamie Kastner Documentary 'The Spoils'** & Davi Pretto's 'Continente'

By Stewart Clarke [+] June 10, 2024 6:00am

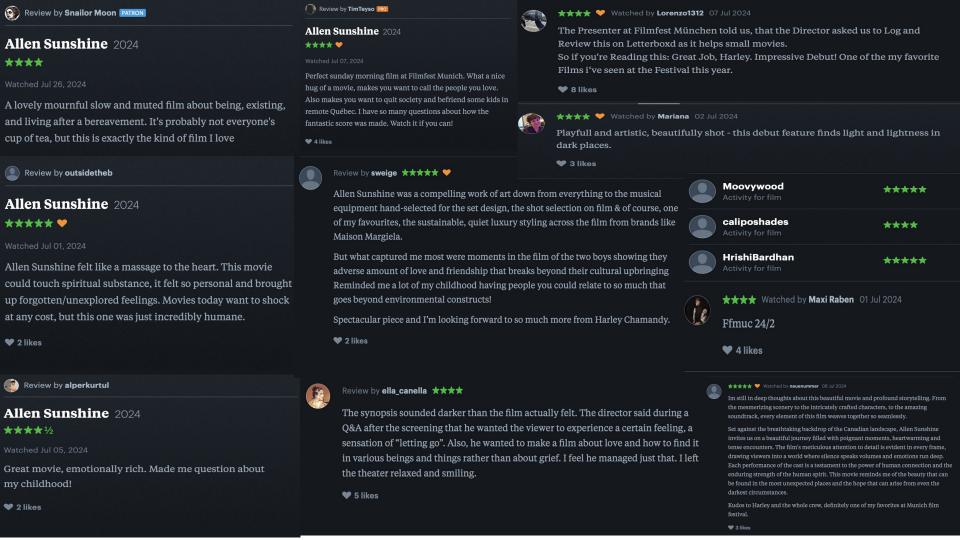
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**EXCLUSIVE:** The Munich International Film Festival has set an eclectic trio of world premieres for its upcoming 41st edition. Harley Chamandy's Allen Sunshine, Jamie Kastner feature doc The Spoils and Davi Pretto's Continente will each premiere, Deadline can reveal.

ALERTS

Allen Sunshine is the first feature from Harley Chamandy, the Lebanese-Greek-Egyptian helmer out of Montreal. The film follows a music mogul who retreats to a remote cabin to mourn his famous wife's suicide. Amid the solitude of the Canadian wilderness he struggles with grief, until an unexpected encounter ends his isolation.



# About Allen Sunshine

#### **LOGLINE**

A music mogul retreats to a remote cabin to mourn his famous wife's suicide. Amid the solitude of the Canadian wilderness he struggles with grief, until an unexpected encounter ends his isolation.

#### **SYNOPSIS**

Allen Sunshine tells the story of a former music mogul who retreats to an isolated lake-side home to grieve his famous wife's suicide.

He copes by composing ambient electronic music and nurturing an unexpected friendship with two young boys.

Throughout the course of his stages of grief, Allen encounters characters that remind him of what he's lost and forgotten, and what he hopes to gain and reconcile.

#### **DIRECTORS STATEMENT**

I wanted to make a film about love, and what it means to live without it and finding it again in new forms. To choose optimism is to choose happiness and that's what I hoped to push with my film. In our current landscape, it seems that so much art made for and by young people is cynical and nihilistic and I hoped to bring a different kind of sensibility to my generation.

The film first began with an image of a man living alone on a lake with his dog and making electronic music. I was thinking about big vintage synthesizers by a lake. Then, I began to think about celebrity and fame, which has increasingly come to be regarded as an end in itself. The themes of isolation, natural beauty, celebrity, alienation, and grief eventually came together in the figure of Allen, who enjoys the trappings of wealth and fame but also contends with the fact that his wife was driven to suicide. Allen finds solace in his friendship with the two ten year old boys who open his eyes to the simple things that make life worth living.

I was honored to have world premiered at the 41st Munich International Film Festival, to have won the TRT First Cut + Award for best works in progress at Karlovy Vary IFF, and to have won the 2024 Werner Herzog Award.

















#### **Harley Chamandy**

Writer and Director

Allen Sunshine is Harley's first feature film which he shot when he was 22. At 17, Harley was selected as one of 55 filmmakers from around the world to work under the guidance of legendary filmmaker, Werner Herzog at the EICTV in Cuba.

He graduated from NYU in 2021 in the Global Liberal Studies Program with a minor in Creative Writing, Italian, and Film Producing. During the program, he lived in Florence, Italy. His short films have showed at many film festivals around the world. He has directed and produced music videos for Universal Music Group.

His debut feature film *Allen Sunshine*, won the TRT First Cut+ Award for best works in progress at Karlovy Vary IFF, world premiered at the 41st Munich International film festival and was awarded the 2024 Werner Herzog Film Award.



### **Chantal Chamandy**

Producer, Mother and Son Films

Chantal began her career in the entertainment industry as an actress and singer when she became a member of a multi-million selling duet. She was a Juno-nominated artist, and achieved critical acclaim for her PBS TV show, which she wrote, starred in, and produced, entitled *Chantal Live at the Pyramids* Chantal. Chantal went on to produce her first feature film entitled *Hit By Lightning* starring Jon Cryer (*Two and a Half Men*) and Will Sasso (*Three Stooges*).

Chantal has been a creative collaborator, and the Producer, for all of her son Harley Chamandy's films, such as Harley's award winning short films *The Final Act of Joey Jumbler* and *Where It's Beautiful When It Rains*. Most recently, she served as the Producer of *Allen Sunshine*. The two plan to collaborate together in the future on both their respective projects.



#### **Laurent Allaire**

Producer, Chasseurs Films

Laurent Allaire has worked in the film industry for over twenty years, both as producer and founder of CHASSEURS FILMS and as distributor and co-founder of distribution company LA DISTRIBUTRICE DE FILMS. His expertise in distribution contributes significantly to how he approaches projects in the development, production and throughout the marketing of a film.

Laurent has produced over twenty short films including Palme d'Or competing *Chef de Meute* and 6 feature films in the last few years and has just started a film services production company to take on international film projects.



#### Alex Coco

Executive Producer

Alex Coco has produced films such as Sean Baker's A24 Cannes Official Selection *Red Rocket*, Sean Price Williams *The Sweet East* which premiered at the Directors Fortnight and most recently *Pet Shop Days* which premiered at the 80th Venice International Film Festival. Coco produced the 2024 Palme d'Or Winning *Anora* by Sean Baker.



#### **Kenny Suleimanagich**

Cinematographer (Super16mm)

Kenny Suleimanagich is a cinematographer based in New York City and Los Angeles. His work spans narrative, documentary, and commercial across 16mm, 35mm and digital formats.

Projects he has shot have appeared at Sundance Film Festival, Slamdance, SXSW, Rooftop, Fantasia, Cinequest, Maryland, New Orleans, Camden, and Outfest Film Festivals. Commercial work includes clients like Versace, Byredo, Salomon, Google, McDonalds, Uber, Casper, Jose Cuervo. His editorial work has appeared in *Vogue*, *The New Yorker*, *GQ*, *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, and NBC News.



#### Vincent Leclerc

Lead Actor

Vincent Leclerc is a Canadian actor from Trois-Rivières, Quebec. He is noted for his performance in the 2018 film *La chute de l'empire Américain*, for which he received a Prix Iris nomination for Best Supporting actor in 2019.

Leclerc is also noted for his starring role as Séraphin Poudrier in the television series *Les Pays D'en Haut*, for which he won the won the Gémeaux Award for Best Actor in a Short Run Drama Series in 2016, and for acting alongside Leonardo Dicaprio in the *The Revenant*, directed by Academy Award-winner Alejandro Iñárritu.



#### **Catherine Souffront**

Supporting Actress

Catherine is a bilingual, versatile and passionate actress who thrives on challenges. On July 31, 2018, the woman who had previously worked as a crown prosecutor in Montreal left everything behind in order to pursue what she felt was her path: a life of artistic expression.

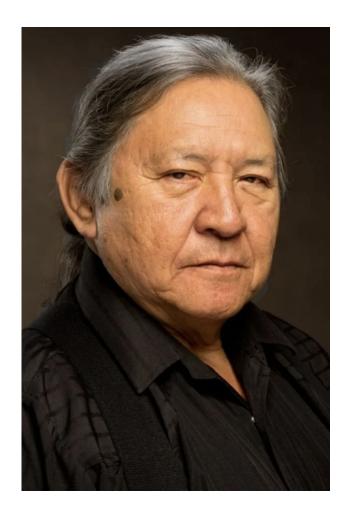
Since then, Catherine has played multiple roles on the small screen. In addition to seeing her recurrently as Mylène in *L'oeil du cyclone*. , the nurse Jocelyne in the *Red Bracelets* as well as the mermaid Coralie in *L'Ile Kilucru*. On the big screen, Catherine is part of the cast of the hit *December 23*, where she plays Jessica.



# **Joseph Whitebird**

Supporting Actor

After trucking for 35 yrs, Joseph began to chase his passion as an actor. *Allen Sunshine* is Joseph's first speaking role in a film. Joseph will continue to follow his dreams and passions as an actor for film and television. And continue with his hobby as a karaoke singer.



## **Liam Quiring - Nkindi**

Originally from Toronto, Ontario, Liam is a Young Artist Academy™Award winning actor with experience in TV & Film and theatre. Liam has screen experience working with top stars in the musical comedy *Schmigadoon!* on AppleTV+, and *Holly Hobbie* on Hulu. Liam has won awards for his past work in TV, Film, and Commercial work with Young Artist Academy, Nova Star Awards, and Joey Awards.



## **Miles Phoenix Foley**

Miles has acted in multiple TV series and films including *Seagrass*, which premiered at TIFF in 2023. *Allen Sunshine* is his first major part in a feature film.



#### Contact

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