***“FAST GIRLS”***

**Production Notes**

**7th March 2012**

***“FAST GIRLS”***

**An Introduction…**

November 2011 saw the start of principal photography in London on pacey sports drama, ***“FAST GIRLS”***, which charts the rollercoaster journey of a British female sprint relay team, and stars a trio of Britain’s hottest young stars: **LENORA CRICHLOW** *(Being Human),* **LILY JAMES** *(Wrath of the Titans)* and **BRADLEY JAMES** *(Merlin).*  Directed by award-winning young filmmaker **REGAN HALL** *(3 Hours)* and produced by **DAMIAN JONES** *(The Iron Lady, Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll)*, ***“FAST GIRLS”*** is co-scripted by **NOEL CLARKE** *(Adulthood, Kidulthood),* **JAY BASU** and **ROY WILLIAMS. CLARKE** also heads the strong supporting cast line-up of**, LORRAINE BURROUGHS** *(Dr Who)***,** BAFTA nominee **PHIL DAVIS** *(Vera Drake)***, RUPERT GRAVES** *(V For Vendetta)*andnewcomers **LASHANA LYNCH** and **DOMINIQUE TIPPER,** as well as British under-23 triple jump champion **HANNAH FRANKSON.**

When sassy streetwise *Shania* (Lenora Crichlow) meets ambitious, middle class *Lisa* (Lily James), their two worlds collide on the athletics track with explosive results. As the ***“FAST GIRLS”*** strive to qualify for a major world athletics championship, they battle adversity and rivalry on their dramatic, heartwarming and inspirational journey.

Financed by **BFI FILM FUND,** **STUDIOCANAL** and **AEGIS** and developed by the **UK FILM COUNCIL**, **STUDIOCANAL** will release **“FAST GIRLS”** in the UK on 15th June 2012. Produced by **DAMIAN JONES** for **DJ FILMS**, executive producers are **DANNY PERKINS** and **JENNY BORGARS** for **STUDIOCANAL** and **PAUL BRETT** and **GRAEME LAW** for **AEGIS.**  **EALING METRO** is handling international sales.

***“FAST GIRLS”*Synopsis**

Twenty-two year-old *Shania Edwards* (Lenora Crichlow) seems like a regular girl from a London council estate, but she possesses raw talent as a sprinter that sets her apart from other girls. She qualifies for the World Championships in the 200 metres, narrowly beating her archrival *Lisa Temple* (Lily James).

*Shania’s* coach, *Brian* (Phil Davis) is elated and as a bonus, *Shania* is asked to join the relay team by coach *Tommy Southern* (Noel Clarke). Shejoins veteran sprinter and all-round live-wire *Trix Warren,* the charismatic *Belle Newman,* privileged rich kid *Lisa Temple* and reserves Sarah and Rachel. *Carl* (Bradley James), the attractive team physiotherapist, is the icing on the cake as far as *Shania* is concerned, and the two strike up an instant friendship.

*Lisa* islivid at having her sprint rival on the relay team and the two girls become even more fiercely competitive with each other. *Shania* soon has the wind taken out of her flirty sails when *Trix* and *Belle* warn her that staff *(Carl)* and athletes fraternizing is strictly off-limits and to be on her guard for *Lisa* who has had a crush on *Carl* for years!

Nothing’s ever as it appears on the surface and *Lisa* is secretly struggling with the immense pressure her former Olympic gold medalist father *David* (Rupert Graves) is putting on her.

When all the girls are at a corporate sponsorship event, unused to the glitz and glamour, *Shania* covers her insecurity by getting drunk and soon finds herself in a screaming match with *Lisa*, who she accuses of being a ‘daddy’s girl’. Embarrassed and depressed, *Shania* returns home to find her sister *Tara* and *Daze* her on/off boyfriendhosting a massive party. She joins in, oblivious to the consequences…

The following morning the team travel to Barcelona for a vitally important championships and *Shania* is badly hung-over. The first race goes very badly and then *Shania* misses a vital changeover in relay, causing the team to lose the race. *Shania* is faced with angry admonishments and she quits.

*Shania* returns to London to find *Tara* and *Daze* gone, and her flat trashed. With her home life in tatters, she decides she must focus entirely on her training.

Meanwhile, *Lisa* is sorely disappointed that her team lost, but her mother, *Ellie,* who is estranged from *Lisa’s* father, tries to convince *Lisa* that her father won’t reject her if she fails to become a championship athlete. Deep down, neither of them truly believes it.

During a physio session *Shania* confides in *Carl* and they end up kissing. *Belle* walks in at the crucial moment but promises not to tell anyone.

*Belle* invites *Shania* for a girlie night out and *Shania* finally emerges from her self-imposed seclusion, to rekindle her burgeoning friendships with her former teammates – even making some progress with *Lisa*!

Feeling renewed and stronger after the bonding session with the girls, *Shania* buckles down into serious training mode. She’s wants a medal.

The date for the World Championships is growing closer and the teams move into the Athlete’s Village for intensive last minute training. In the 200 metre final, neither *Lisa* nor *Shania* win medals. *Lisa* is particularly devastated as she sees the disapproval and disappointment on her father’s face. *Shania* sees *Carl* comforting *Lisa* and storms off.

*Trix* succumbs to injury during her race, ruining her career and forcing her off the relay team, *so* *Lisa* reluctantly agrees they should ask *Shania* to take *Trix’s* place. They miss out on a place in the heat because of a slow change-over between *Lisa* and *Shania*, who have an out and out brawl on the track following the race. However, the team in third place are disqualified and Great Britain move into the next round.

Upon *David Temple’s* insistence, *Shania* is dropped from the team for throwing the first punch at *Lisa*. *Carl* convinces *Shania* to stay, train, resolve the situation and fight to run in the relay. Surprisingly, *Lisa* agrees and aftershe and *Shania* master their changeover in training, she confronts her father and demands that *Shania* be put back on the team.

*Shania* re-joins the *Fast* Girls and their chance for glory arrives - the changeover is perfect and the girls run home to victory and finally triumph over adversity.

**The History Behind *“Fast Girls”…***

“It’s great to be part of this. I’m really happy that a film’s come along that will portray my sport and my event – it’s really exciting for me as an athlete”

 Jeanette Kwakye, Olympic sprinter

 (Team GB 2012)

“British athletics in its entirety is fantastic but the female athletes generally have not been put at the forefront. *Fast Girls* will really highlight the *real* girls, training up and down this country, who these actresses are representing. I hope it raises the profile of athletics in Britain.We’ve got the Olympics coming up this summer and *Fast Girls* will set the stage so those girls can go out and win the real gold”.

 Shani Anderson,

(2000 Olympics GB relay squad)

The original inspiration for *“Fast Girls”* came around eight years ago from producer Damian Jones. He had always had a passion for athletics and was fascinated by the idea of these dedicated talents training relentlessly to get into the public spotlight once every four years.

Jones went on to produce the huge teen successes *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood,* then Mat Whitecross’ acclaimed Ian Dury biopic *Sex&Drugs&Rock&Roll* starring Andy Serkis, and most recently the multi award-winning *The Iron Lady* starring Meryl Streep.

But, it wasn’t until around a year and a half ago that *“Fast Girls”* became a reality. Jones had mentioned the concept to Noel Clarke when the two first worked together on *Kidulthood* , but as Clarke recalls, “A light suddenly went on when Damian and I talked about it in 2010 and we realized with the Olympics coming up in 2012 maybe we should do *Fast Girls* and fast!”.

Jones swiftly brought Clarke on board to develop his original idea in collaboration with co-writer Jay Basu. “The basic focus of the story is a British female sprint relay team who take home a gold medal against all odds and the journey explores their individual and collective differences” explains Damian Jones. Writer Roy Williams took the script to the next stage and when director Regan Hall came on board the final pieces of the jigsaw came together.

Jones was introduced to Hall via the UK Film Council Film Fund (now with the BFI): “I wasn’t familiar with him but he had a really impressive commercials reel and great short film *(3 Hours)*, which has won many awards. When it came to the script, Regan had a very stylistic take on how aesthetically pleasing it could all be. It was never going to be a grimy version of Britain with Regan at the helm - it was always going to be heightened and celebratory”.

With a deadline to get the film in the can and released before the 2012 Olympics in London, Jones and the team he gathered had to rise to every challenge: “Aside from the weather (because we had to shoot mid-winter for summer), as always British movies are hard to put together. We also had to sell the idea of a mixed race lead actress and I think we’re quite possibly the first major feature film in the UK to have a mixed race female lead”. With the support of the UK Film Council (now the BFI) and with what is essentially a very commercial script, coupled with the groundbreaking role that films like *Kidulthood, Adulthood* and *Streetdance3D* have played in attracting those all-important youth audiences, Jones achieved it. “Obviously with the Olympics coming up we can also ride the wave of those interested in sport. It’s a very universal coming-of-age story, so the other important factor in getting it financed was convincing people that it can play beyond the UK, which I absolutely believe it will because the story has universal appeal and universal themes that people can relate to” he concludes.

Casting *“Fast Girls”* was no mean feat as the key cast didn’t just have to act, they had to convince the audience they really were athletes, as Damian Jones explains, “We brought the casting down to a short list of the top four for each role and then we did a running audition which was absolutely necessary to show that they were limber and physical. In the auditions, even though some of the candidates looked toned their actual movement looked quite slow and ponderous. After the running audition, we selected our cast and we engaged some amazing trainers, Jeanette Kwakye and Shani Anderson run for the British team themselves and they trained the girls for between six and eight weeks to put them in great shape for the film”.

Jones admits that he knows the pain of the kind of training regime the girls were put through, “They trained me very briefly until I succumbed to too much pain! These trainers are serious, they’re athletes and they train other athletes. What you learn is that there's a certain level of pain involved and passing through that pain barrier is something us regular folk are not used to. Our girls had to assume that responsibility and they worked really hard and look fantastic and just like the real thing as a result of all that hard work and pain”.

British female Olympians Jeanette Kwakye and Shani Anderson, who were brought on board to coach the *Fast Girls* are both proud that a film is finally being made about their field, Shani Anderson explains, “If you think about it, in the relay you have four people running, starting and stopping at different times, the baton moving at about 25 miles an hour and continuously across the whole of the 400 metres. The risk of it going wrong is high, that’s why you need to practice and really get slick and work together as a unit which is what the whole film is about, it’s about the girls coming together. If you don’t gel as a team, that baton’s movement doesn’t flow, so that part of it is really realistic and it’s exciting. The relay is always the end of the championships - it’s the climax. It’s what everyone looks forward to. When you’re actually running the relay it’s hectic and nerve-wracking, especially if you’re on the last leg. I remember doing that at the 2000 Olympics and it’s an amazing amount of pressure. Things can go wrong and sometimes they do, but when it goes right it’s amazing. That’s when it can be really special”

**On Your Marks, Get Set… and Turnover**

**The Challenges of Shooting a Summer Sports Movie in British Mid-Winter**

“I think if I see another racetrack I’ll go slightly crazy. I plan to be watching the British Olympic sprint team from the comfort of my sofa”

Regan Hall, Director *“Fast Girls”*

“When you’re trying to shoot a summer sports movie during an English winter, you just have to hope and pray,” admits director Regan Hall. “Luckily the sun was shining on us every day but it was *very* cold. The girls were very brave and you’ve all seen the running outfits they’re wearing – it’s nothing more than a bikini. Some days the temperatures were down to 2 degrees and we were sweeping ice off the racetrack. So I take my hat off to the girls, they did really an amazing job”.

Shooting exteriors in November also meant the length of the shooting day was limited, “The sun was coming up just before 8am and setting well before 4pm, so we were chasing the sun around the race track as fast as we could. That said, the English winter was very kind to us all things considered,” says Hall with relief.

The two major locations for *“Fast Girls”* were the National Sports Stadium at Crystal Palace in southeast London and the Lee Valley Athletics Centre in Edmonton, north London where the British Olympic and Paralympic teams were actually training during much of the shoot, as director Hall explains:

“We had the wonderful luxury of being able to film at the Lee Valley Athletics Centre, which is one of the British Olympians high performance centres. This meant the girls were training alongside athletes who we are going to see running in the Olympics this year. That immediately brought a great sense of energy and purpose to what they were doing. They were hearing first-hand stories from the current and previous Olympic teams, some of which were very funny. To hear about the female relay squads of the past and how similar some of the story points in our film are to reality made us realize that sometimes truth is stranger than fiction”.

“The portrayal of the relay in this film is very realistic” notes Olympic sprinter and *Fast Girls* trainer Jeanette Kwakye, “ I tell the girls stories of failed relays that we’ve done and about the fall-outs the team’s had – it’s very real. Obviously there are one or two scenes that are exaggerated but at the same time I think the girls will start to feel now *wow*, this isn’t so extraordinary, this does actually happen amongst relay teams”.

Even dedicated *Fast Girls* need to take time off the track to have some fun, and a night shoot around Waterloo was the location for the girls’ bonding session. “It’s a really fun scene in the nightclub where some rough boys are chatting up *Lisa* and she tips a drink over their head and the girls all do a runner from the bar. Seeing these four girls running in slow motion through this tunnel covered in graffiti near Waterloo in their nightclub gear, holding their high heels is a great moment. My crew and I were strapped onto our tracking vehicle, the notorious ‘mule’ as we dubbed it, so we had two cameras going at once following the girls it’s a great moment,” recalls Hall.

The nature of the preparation and training process and the need to maintain a very high level of fitness, meant the odds of at least one of the *Fast Girls* sustaining an injury were pretty likely. It just so happened to be leading lady Lenora Crichlow who plays *Shania!*  “Unfortunately Lenora succumbed to a very common athletics injury to her foot but we had Olympic trainers overseeing the entire process with their back-up of physios” explains line producer Ben Rimmer, “thank goodness we had the best skills and the best team on hand in the entire country”.

Lenora’s injury meant on certain shooting days the production had to be extremely creative and resourceful about how they shot certain scenes. “On the days she really couldn’t run, we cheated using the camera rig that David Beckham and Thierry Henry have used for commercials for insurance reasons so they don’t sustain injury during filming” explains producer Damian Jones.

“Lenora’s injury was a traditional sports injury and it made us all realize how real athletes often have to run through pain,” notes Jones.

By the final day of principal photography on 22nd December 2011, cast and crew were relieved to be warm and inside filming a big party scene where the *Fast* Girls are at a corporate fundraiser at the top of the Tate Modern on London’s Bankside. It was only days until Christmas, the film was wrapping after a short but intense shoot, so everyone was in festive spirit, the girls had swapped their skimpy running gear and track suits for glamour, bling and heels - Olympians Jeanette Kwakye and Shani Anderson included, and Noel Clarke was keeping the energy up on the dance floor with the *Fast Girls* - what a perfect way to cross the film’s finishing line.

**Regan Hall**

**The Director’s Vision…**

*“Fast Girls* is the story of two rivals. There’s *Shania Andrews,* a girl from the wrong side of the tracks who’s a natural-born sprinter. For her, running is a means of escape from her life on the Estate. Then there’s *Lisa Temple*, a posh girl whose dad is a former gold medalist. *Lisa* has been groomed for success from an early age, so when *Shania* comes onto the scene and threatens her position, sparks fly. They’re both forced to work together on the sprint relay team, and we follow their ups and downs as they attempt to take on the world”.

“I first became involved with *Fast Girls* when producer Damian Jones approached me. I really enjoyed the script and once we met it was clear that he and I shared a similar vision for the film. Damian is currently enjoying the success of his previous film, *The Iron Lady,* starring Meryl Streep, which is doing so well and winning so many awards. To be part of his follow-up project is great, especially considering this is my first feature”.

“You can never underestimate the amount of preparation that goes into making a film. We spent a lot of time developing the script, then there’s the casting, location hunting, bringing crew on board, not to mention planning how the hell you are going to shoot a

bunch of girls running around the race track at 100 miles an hour! The workload is insane and I’ve been lucky to have an amazing team at my side”.

“We were also blessed to pull together a wonderful cast.  Noel Clarke wrote the first draft of the script and also takes the role of *Tommy*, who’s the coach and trainer to the *Fast Girls.* Noel is great, a real bundle of positive energy and he’s amazing on screen. He’s a real filmmaking talent in his own right, so to be collaborating with him was a pleasure - he was very supportive. As *Tommy,* he really helped gel the girls together as a team.  Noel’s just gone off to LA to shoot the new *Star Trek* movie, which is awesome. I hope we don’t lose him to Hollywood because he’s a great British filmmaker”.

“Casting the *Fast Girls* and seeing them train and grow into their roles was an exciting process to be a part of. Lenora Crichlow as *Shania* was outstanding. She went through so much hard work in order to bring *Shania* to the screen. Throughout the training she went through injury and rehabilitation, so understands first-hand how grueling life as an athlete can be. Lenora is a really talented actor and she helped the two sides of *Shania’s* character to really shine through; her strength on the running track, and her vulnerability off of it”.

“Lily James plays *Lisa,* who is *Shania’s* rival and nemesis. You can’t help but be drawn to Lily on screen - she’s a great talent and was the perfect fit for *Lisa*. Lily worked incredibly hard to bring her body into sprinter-form. On set, every time I turned around she was in the corner doing sit-ups just before going on camera and her hard work really shows on screen. Lily dyed her long brown hair blonde for the film. I almost had to drag her kicking and screaming into the hairdresser’s but it paid off - she looks great on screen”.

“Neither of our two leads, Lenora nor Lily, had any previous sprinting experience when they took the roles on. We had a very short prep time and during that process they not only toned their bodies, they had to get to grips with sprinting technique and went on a serious diet regime”.

“When choosing our *Fast Girls* there had to be a balance between athleticism and acting ability, so we were very lucky to find girls who crossed both of those fields. However they did have a big learning curve ahead of them, not only in the way their bodies looked but also in the way their bodies moved. It was eye opening working with Shani and Jeanette, our trainers. Together we watched clips of the world’s best athletes on YouTube to get an understanding of what a sprinter’s physicality is like. As a layperson I’d never before noticed things like how a sprinter’s hips move, where their knees are, how their posture is. Our girls had to learn all of that within a matter of weeks. They did an incredible job”.

“Lashana Lynch is amazing as *Belle*. *Belle* is the fun and cheeky *Fast Girl* and Lashana really stepped into her shoes wonderfully.  She brought a really great vivacious, fun attitude to the set, and to the role. There are some great comedy moments with *Belle* and Lashana’s timing is wonderful. Plus her physique is naturally athletic, and she toned up even more for the film. She had to learn how to hurdle and she made it look effortless”.

“We cast Lorraine Burroughs as *Trix*, who’s the veteran golden girl of the sprint team. Lorraine’s on-screen presence as *Trix* is so cool. She had these wonderful cornrows put in her hair and as soon as she stepped onto set in character she seemed to grow three inches, it was amazing to watch. The one advantage we had with Lorraine is that she’s a former sprinter from her teen years so she already knows the lifestyle, she knows the training techniques and for her to bring her acting craft to it, we were so lucky”.

“Dominique Tipper and Hannah Frankson complete the *Fast Girls* - they came in as our two reserves *Sarah* and *Rachel*. Dominique’s from a dancing background and it was wonderful to see her walk on set for the first time after being in training. A dancer’s technique and sprinter’s technique are quite different - she was floating through the drills with this amazing poise, almost bouncing, because her balance and physicality are so well-honed on the dance floor. She had to learn how to rough it up a little bit for her role as a sprinter”.

“Hannah Frankson was Britain’s under-23 triple jump champion last year.  She’s the real deal. We’re very lucky to have her as part of our six *Fast Girls* squad because she bought that authenticity and reality that the other girls really weren’t aware of. Some of the comments that Hannah would be making on set were hilarious because she sees it from a completely authentic athletics background”.

“We’ve got all these fantastic girls for the guys to look at on screen, so we had to cast a good-looking guy for the girls too!  So, we brought in Bradley James who audiences will know from *Merlin.*Bradley was great as *Carl* and had a really good chemistry with Lenora, whose character *Shania* falls for him. It was fun on our big Crystal Palace crowd day, because as soon as Bradley came on set, his fans in the crowd were pretty excited – there were a few bleeding hearts and Twitter went Bradley-mad the day after. He’s very relaxed, very calm and the one advantage Bradley had over the girls of course was that he wasn’t out on the running track in his underwear so he had a little bit of a warmer experience in the film than the girls”.

“Rupert Graves plays *Lisa’s* father *David Temple,* and Rupert brought a wonderful acting legacy to the film. Most of our cast were relatively new and young, so it was great to have an actor of Rupert’s stature on the film”.

“*Fast Girls* is a fast-paced, visually dynamic film. The audience will see lots of athletics action, conflict and drama, a hint of romance, all building up to the thrill of a championship final. It has a fantastic positive energy to it and I’m sure it will appeal to audiences all around the UK”.

“My background is in commercials, especially fashion, so I was able to bring some of that sensibility to it. The girls look great. It wasn’t easy shooting summer sports movie in early winter, but luckily we were blessed by great sunshine. This allowed me to indulge my love of lens flares and shooting into the sun. Thanks to the time of year it was dark by the middle of the afternoon, which forced us to be up well before sunrise to make use of every minute of light we could”.

“And then there was the cold! On some mornings we were literally sweeping ice off the racetrack. I then had the unenviable task of ordering a dozen or so girls in skimpy running outfits to get out onto the track. I had the comfort of being able to stay warm in a fluffy coat sipping hot coffee. Those girls went above and beyond!”

“I was very fortunate to have John Lynch as my Director of Photography. John is a wonderful guy and has shot some of the UK’s best music videos and commercials. He’s a master of light and despite our limited resources has done a great job of giving the film a warm and positive look”.

“We filmed digitally on the RED Epic camera, which gave us the ability to shoot a lot of our action sequences in slow motion. Slow motion gives a wonderfully graceful and poetic look to running. Combined with our great soundtrack we’ve got some exciting sequences”.

“It’s great to be bringing a multi-cultural, female-led film to the big screen. With the Olympics just around the corner our timing couldn’t be better, and I hope to see lots of beaming faces walking out of the cinema. We’re a truly British film and it couldn’t have been done without the tremendous support of the BFI and StudioCanal. We might be low-budget, but I’m proud to say we’ve managed to pull off something special”.

**Get As Fit As The *“Fast Girls”…***

**Tips from Trainers Jeanette Kwakye & Shani Anderson**

Jeanette Kwakye is the British 100m female sprint champion. She reached the finals in the 2008 Beijing Olympics with Team GB, she is also in the current UK sprint relay squad and will participate in London’s 2012 Olympics.

Shani Anderson represented Britain in female athletics for eleven years. She competed in the 2000 Sydney Olympics in the British relay squad and she won a bronze medal at the 2002 Commonwealth Games. She is now a UK athletics certified coach and a personal trainer.

**Diet**

“I left them to it. I had my full English breakfast in the morning to get me going while the *Fast Girls* were eating lentils and sipping mineral water!”

 Regan Hall, Director of *Fast Girls*

Tips:

* Eat little and often (every two and a half hours)
* Eat smaller portions (the size of the palm of your hand or your fist)
* Eat from a smaller plate
* Eat lots of protein, vegetables, nuts, seeds, dried fruits
* Stop when you’re full – don’t carry on eating!
* Cut out alcohol
* Cut out treats like chocolate and replace it with rice cakes with healthy toppings
* Reduce fat intake
* Cut out dairy
* Cut out wheat

**Exercise**

“The girls were lifting weights, doing circuit training, hill sprints and unlike a big budget Hollywood film, we didn’t have the luxury of time. We were in a very short pre-production period and short filming period as well, so those girls had to get fit quick”.

Regan Hall, Director

“A lot of the stuff that we do in the weight room is to get that *look* and the power that we have to generate as sprinters. That means lots of exercises and people are always quite shocked with just how much they can actually lift in the gym weight-wise. A shopping bag can be heavy but in the gym you can probably pick up twenty times the size of a shopping bag. Unexpected I know!”

Jeanette Kwakye

Tips:

* Short sprints
* Repetition runs up to 250 metres
* Hill runs
* Circuit training
* Abs: 600 – 800 sit-ups per day
* Weight training

“I’ve been giving the *Fast Girls* the type of training I used to do when I was competing, so they’ve been working very hard. I’m like a proud mother when I see them running! They’ve put up with my fits and screams of ‘faster’ and just generally put themselves through amazing paces. What they’ve been asked to do is no mean feat”

 Shani Anderson

**The Results…**

“The change in these girls has been huge. They came to as non-sporting ladies who were in fantastic shape, they would fit in any kind of clothing and be perfectly fine, but to look like athletes there needed to be radical change. Now they’re stronger, leaner and have lost loads of weight and have built some muscle tone. The *Fast Girls* are looking really good!”

 Shani Anderson

**Q&As**

**The Cast**

**Lenora Crichlow *(Shania)***

**Q: What’s the plot of *“Fast Girls”* and who is *Shania?***

A: It’s pretty much an underdog story. *Shania*’s the unlikely hero of the piece. We follow her from her home track and her very humble beginnings, all the way to the world championships, where she has to learn a lot of life lessons about herself and about the sport in order to get the glory.

**Q: Talk us through the training regime you had to embark on to prepare for this role?**

A: Well at the moment I actually have inflamed tendons, which sounds much more exciting than it actually is. It just means it’s a bit difficult to walk, so I’ve had lots of physio and treatments to help it and a few painkillers! What I’ve really learned from taking on this role is that most athletes are in some sort of pain or discomfort most of the time. They are constantly pushing their bodies and tweaking the muscles and pulling stuff and having to get it fixed, so physios are on site when they are training all of the time, just to put them back together because they push their bodies so far.

Despite the injuries, the training regime has been a lot of fun. The first two weeks were the hardest by far because I couldn’t do anything and everyone kept telling me to engage muscles that I didn’t have, but as you start seeing the progress and you start feeling stronger in yourself it becomes fun. Knowing what we were doing it for, having a goal and training together with the other girls was always a lot more enjoyable.

**Q: Did you have to change your diet or start a special eating regime as part of the training process?**

A: The diet wasn’t too bad actually, because I don’t eat *terribly* anyway. Especially when I’m working, I try to keep my diet quite healthy because you need your energy, you need to look after your skin and your figure, so that’s all part of my discipline anyway. The hardest part was being very organized about how *often* you eat. The key is to eat little and often and that can get a bit challenging and you’re looking at your watch all the time to check when you need your next meal.

**Q: Have the *Fast* Girls all bonded working on this film?**

A: The girls and I haven’t shot masses together, but the stuff we have has been great. There are lots of important little *moments* and small scenesin this film and there are a lot of relationships, histories and chemistry. It moves really fast, so in that sense it helps that we’ve had time to train together before and it helps that we’ve had time off-camera together because there is a lot that I think you need to be able to establish without dialogue and without big long running scenes.

Training with the girls has been great because it keeps you going, it keeps you motivated. It also makes you very supportive of each other – we cheer each other on and it also makes you slightly competitive. I think we all came in with various strengths and weaknesses, but generally it’s been great.

**Q: What’s it been like working with Noel Clarke?**

A: Mr Clarke’s great, he plays our coach and as one of the writers, he’s been part of producing a brilliant story and script. He’s good fun to work with and I think he’s been enjoying himself too. I think it must be quite hard as a writer to let go of a script - I would probably have very definite ideas about what I’d envisioned, but Noel seems to have really just let go, and let it take on its own life.

**Q: What’s it been like working with Director Regan Hall?**

A: Fast! Everything about *Fast Girls* is fast, he shoots fast but he’s great. He’s extremely good at keeping an eye on the aesthetics and how things look which is important. For me as an actress, it’s been such an education learning to deliver the performance, but also keeping it quite stylized I’ve obviously done a lot of TV which is I suppose in a way, is a bit more comfortable, but this film has a real look and a real style to it. Regan’s got a fantastic eye for that.

**Q: Take us through why the relay is such a difficult event?**

A: I think relay is probably difficult because all the runners in the relay team have their own individual events to concentrate on, so they don’t get much time to practice as a team, even though relay is all about working as team. They all split off and train for their own individual events, so the time they get together is often second to their own major event.

Learning the relay is really hard, but it’s a lot to do with practice. We had to pass the baton statically and that was difficult enough, so to do it at speed is all about timing and massively about trust - you *really* have to trust each other. You have to shout ‘hand’ as you come round to hand it someone else, but there are many girls on the track shouting ‘hand’ as well, so if someone’s got a slight accent or lisp then that’s great because then at least it makes them identifiable! I’d say the secret is practice, practice, practice for a relay team.

Obviously the changeovers are what makes or breaks it and just how crucial it is it can be a matter of a tenth of a second. It’s a lot of pressure because as you’re only one of four, if you mess up that’s four disappointments on your shoulders. There’s a line in the script where *Tommy* our coachsays, ‘If you win as a team, you lose as a team’. That’s so true. Losing as team, it must be really hard not to point the blame. Relay’s a tough event.

**Q: What’s been the highlight of the film for you?**

A: I think when we first put on our British team strip and we were all together for the first time. That was fun and a high point. I’ve had some great days. Really early on in the shoot, I had this morning scene where *Shania’s* jogging and it was some ridiculous time like 3.45am and the sun was coming up over the Docklands and London just looked stunning. I sometimes have to be reminded how pretty the city is. It just looked really, really gorgeous. I got that butterfly feeling in my stomach that morning and I thought, ‘I’m in this really cool film.’

**Q: Who’s the most competitive *Fast Girl* out of the cast?**

A: I think we’ve all been competitive within ourselves and against ourselves. Our trainer Shani is very good at making you focus on yourself. I joined the girls quite late in training and when we first ran the 200 metres, I kind of felt like they could have done it six times in my time. I was really frustrated with myself and Shani said to me ‘It’s just you against you really. You’ll get faster, they’ve been training for longer, so it doesn’t matter, you’ve just got to get faster for yourself’. She taught me that if you’re a bit faster next time, that’s progress. Adopting that kind of mentality is really helpful, because it makes you realize we’re not actually competing against each other.

Lorraine Burroughs is quite competitive though! Her character, *Trix* is very old school in her approach and she had quite a lot to prove, she’s been in athletics too long not to be here to win. I know when Lorraine starts to perform as *Trix*, she just has a whole different way about her and everything has a much more competitive edge and that’s a compliment to her. Lorraine has got quite into the whole thing, but again, I think her competitiveness is against herself and she’s just striving to be better.

**Q: What’s the importance of making a British film like *“Fast Girls”?***

A: Making a film like this is important because it’s a celebration of Britishness. It’s lovely to have British female roles with a diverse mix of cultures. I think it’s a lovely story that crosses from *Shania’s* urban world, into the athletics world, into a quite privileged world through *Lisa’s* character. Everything’s there just to tell a story as opposed to preaching or to prove a point. We’ve crossed into lots of different demographics without meaning to.

It’s really nice to see British women of colour in really positive leading roles. I don’t think we see that enough. It’s not about creating an issue and it’s not a racially motivated film which is so refreshing. But, at the same time it’s there and it’s representative, and I know from myself as a woman of colour growing up in this country, that’s really important, just to show that without labouring the point.

**Lily James *(Lisa)***

**Q: Who is Lisa and how does she fit into the plot of *“Fast Girls”?***

A: *Lisa’s*, journey is that of a really dedicated, determined athlete. Her father was an Olympic gold medalist and *Lisa* wants to run the 200 metres to win. She’s got everything going for her, she’s had the best training since she was twelve years of age and her goal has always been to become a championship athlete.

When *Shania* comes along and she’s actually faster than *Lisa,* this rivalry arises and *Lisa* has to come to terms with it. On the journey, *Lisa* grows up and she realizes she has to run for herself, not for her father who’s really pushy. She also realizes she has to work as a team with the other girls.

**Q: Talk us through the training regime you had to take up.**

A: The training’s just been mental! It’s been totally exhilarating and tough at the same time. I’ve put my body through hell - two and a half hours of training every day, five times a week. The diet consists of six meals a day, loads of protein and cutting out everything I love like chocolate and loads of other foods, as well as drinking and going out! It’s been a complete lifestyle change but it’s been worth it because we’ve started to see the results and we’re in way better shape now… we needed to be as we have to wear these ridiculous pants and sports bras and it was pretty horrific the first time we put them on!

**Q: Are there any aspects of the training or diet regime that you’ll continue with after the film’s finished?**

A:I definitely want to because I’ve learnt so much about my body and I have so much respect for athletes now and for the way they have to live their lives. They’re so healthy and they have to look after themselves so much. I definitely, want to continue that on in my own life – I want to exercise more, work out more and the running is definitely something I want to carry on, though to a much lesser degree than I’m doing at the moment!

**Q: What’s it been like working with the other girls?**

A: It’s been cool. I really don’t think we’d have been able to get through it without each other, and that’s actually what the film is trying to say. Lenora’s had a tough time with some injuries but she’s done so well and has powered through, even though she’s been in pain. Each of us have had our own journey through this, some people improve faster or it comes more naturally to them, but when we have our little breakthroughs or our little six-pack muscles start appearing, everyone’s really shared it and we’re all suffering together!

**Q: What’s it been like working with Noel Clarke?**

A: Noel’s great, he’s so funny. The first scene I had with Noel was the scene when all us girls had to strip down into our running pants and tops so you kind of get close straight away, because you have to when you’re standing there semi-naked! Noel’s written a great script and great characters and having him playing our coach as well, brings it all to life.

**Q: Are you quite ‘method’ in your approach to playing a character?**

A: This role has been method without meaning to be because I’ve been living the life of an athlete for the last six weeks before filming started. The training regime has been so strict because you need to sleep, you need to eat right, you need to train and *Lisa* my character is so determined, I’ve sort of understood that through being determined myself.

**Q: What’s it been like working with Director Regan Hall?**

A: Regan’s been great. He cut this little promo together quite early on in shooting to give us a feel of it and it looks beautiful. The shots really come to life and they’re lit beautifully. He brings a lot of energy onto set and he’s really encouraging and I think he’s got a real eye for capturing stuff and making us look good which is what we all want!

**Q: Why is the relay such a difficult sport?**

A: The relay’s really hard and I think we’ve found what the athletes find - that not enough time is given to it. You’ll be running and when the other athlete gets close to you, they scream ‘hand’ and you put your hand out, but when that’s happening with four teams, all of them screaming ‘hand’, I just jump out of my skin!

It’s tough and we’ve had to do a lot of practice with our coach Shani. The first time you try it, you almost break your hand with the stick coming into it. Also, I’m quite slow so I think the other girls have to time their runs so that they don’t speed off before I’ve passed the baton over to them. I think with the relay, the tension is really high and you can see why *Lisa* and *Shania* have this huge fight because the pressure is on and when you mess up you always blame someone else but you’re not quite sure whose fault it was. At the same time, when it goes right, it’s a really amazing feeling to do a good, smooth changeover and start running and take the baton home.

**Q: Who will enjoy *“Fast Girls”* and what will they take from this film?**

A: Initially I thought it would be for a young girlie audience but through the filming process we’ve really concentrated on the sport and athletics side of it and in making it accurate. We’ve had these incredible athletes come in and do their events and run with us, so I think it’s going to really appeal to guys as well as girls. Hopefully athletes will think we’ve done a good job and be proud of how we’re portraying them and their sports. It’s a real feel-good movie but it’s got some really heartbreaking moments too. *Shania* as a character is just incredible - she really strives and fights against everyone, but then it all comes together at the end. I think it’s got a really wide and diverse audience appeal.

What’s so great about *“Fast Girls”* is that it’s about a group of young female athletes who are working hard and training hard - they’ve got a purpose and that’s a really great message to send out to young girls. The *“Fast Girls* are focused, determined and fun. There’s a really nice dynamic between all the girls and they’re all very different characters, so there’s one that every young girl will be able to relate to.

**Lashana Lynch *(Belle)***

**Q: Who is *Belle* and how does she fit into the plot?**

A: *Belle’s* a man eater and a big flirt. She just loves men and will think about them 100% of the time, apart from when she’s on the track when she’s totally focused and she knows exactly what she wants. *Belle* has worked very hard to get to where she is and I’ve made up a back-story that her father trained her when she was really young so she’s been on the track for years. She’s a hurdler, so going from hurdles to relay is a completely different thing to her but she knows what she wants and she’ll do anything to get it. *Belle’s* very proud of her achievements so far and appreciates being with such a good squad. She’s not fazed by any of it, she’s aware of where she is in her life and she knows she still has a long way to go but she’s in a good place and a good state of mind.

**Q: How was the training regime and preparation for this role?**

**A:** Hardcore and five weeks of it! During week one, I thought our coach was trying to kill me, but she obviously knew exactly what she was doing. We were put through regimes that normal people can do, but then she saw where each of us were at personally and just grew us from there.

The regime consisted of a lot of abs work, a lot of press-ups and pushing heavy weights above your head, which I’ve never done before and don’t really look forward to doing again! We did a lot of back-to-back sixty metres where you have two minutes to walk back, then do sixty metres again about ten times. Then we’d do relay which we didn’t get to till about the second or third week. Relay was interesting because you’re used to doing your own thing, then you have to think as a group and kind of split your mind in four ways.

So there’s been a lot of hardcore stuff to get to grips with and I think we just grew so much over the weeks of training. Shani our trainer just threw little things in here, then she’d set us things to do at home as well. You have to discipline yourself to do that at home because when you’re getting to such a good point, you can’t let yourself drop slightly because you can see the difference so quickly. If you haven’t worked on your abs for two days it starts to show. When you’ve been working on them you see the power in your stomach coming through, but if you fall back your muscles just fade away. It’s a really strange process and keeping up is absolutely hardcore.

**Q: What sort of diet did you have to adopt?**

A: I ate really well beforehand anyway as there are loads of things I don’t eat, like dairy and red meat, so I didn’t have too much trouble with cutting out anything apart from rice – I just Iove rice and peas and could eat it any day. Instead I had a lot of brown rice and vegetables, seeds, nuts and dried fruit and stuff like that.

I eat quite big meals normally, so cutting down the portions was definitely the worst thing of all. We had to have portions the size of the palm of your hand so you could have a palm-sized portion of chicken, salad or vegetables, then a fist-full of brown rice or any carbs, which was very difficult and I struggled with that. It’s easier to eat off a saucer because if you get a plate, you tend just to pile it all on. Normally I don’t really gauge when I’m full, I just eat and then when the plate is empty I’m done. That was probably the most difficult thing but it’s going really well and it’s something I’m definitely going to keep up after the film.

**Q: Tell us about learning the relay and why it’s so difficult?**

A: When you’re training, you get used to being on your own and competing against yourself. On the track, you have to think about the other people and about beating them. With the relay you have to kind of split your mind four ways, and although you’ve done your job, you just pray that we are all together as one. It’s hard and when they’re in a relay team, I really don’t know how these athletes do it because the responsibility is shared so wide, you feel kind of out of control in a sense because you can only control your job and when your jobs done, it’s done and you can’t do any more.

I enjoyed the relay though - it was good. We started off walking and passing the baton back, then skipping, then jogging, then running and it just kind of came together. We worked really well as a team, we’re a great group of girls and I think we actually looked very authentic on the track the other day, so I’m happy about that. It wasn’t as difficult as I thought, I thought we were going to drop the baton a couple of times but just once or twice and then we just got over it.

**Q: What’s been the highlight of the film for you?**

A: Weirdly enough, going from training to filming because we’d just been training for so long it got to a point where I wanted to do the transition from athlete to actor and put the two disciplines together. I think we all had points where we started to get a bit down on ourselves. But generally I felt confident in my ability and I knew I could push it out for filming but putting the two together was a big responsibility. You’re representing athletes across the world who do this year in year out, so I think the highlight for me, was making it look authentic and making those athletes proud.

**Q: Of the key cast, who is the most competitive *“Fast Girl”?***

A:Me for one! I’m very competitive, but I try not to show it too much because we’re all working as a group and we’re all aiming for the same thing. Dominique is pretty competitive because she’s got a really physical background. She knows her body really well and knows exactly what she’s doing with it and uses it to the best of her ability. Dominique knows when she needs to stop, so she stops and equally, she knows when she can push herself more. I think we all kind of took a leaf out of that book and just pushed as much as we could and reached our limits.

**Q: Who do you think Fast Girls is aimed at?**

A: Definitely young girls, and woman in general. I don’t really think it’s specifically aimed at athletes or sports women, I think all women will enjoy it. To have a group of strong beautiful ladies on screen powering through is inspirational. I think young women who are aspiring to be something, a film like this can give them the extra push and give them that stamp of approval and to tell them ‘Yeah, you can do it’.

**Q: What’s it been like working with Noel Clarke?**

A: Really good, he’s a big joker. He has a nice vibe and that’s good to have on set. Whenever we cut, he’s dancing or throwing some kind of joke. He’s funny and the days when he’s been in have been really good.

I was asking him the other day whether we’ve accomplished his original vision, because when you write something, you must have this clear vision in your head. He said it’s beyond what we had in his head and as an actress that makes me happy.

**Q: What’s it been like working with Director Regan Hall?**

A: Regan knows exactly what he wants, he’s very passionate and he’s very on the ball. He runs to schedule and know exactly what he needs. His background is very visual so he knows how he wants things to look. We know the film is definitely going to look stunning.

**Q: What’s the importance of producing a British film like *“Fast Girls”?***

A: For one, we haven’t had a film about females in sports, I think the last one was *Bend It Like Beckham* and that was years ago. I think it’s really important to see strong females on screen. It’s really important to send out the kind of important messages that are in this film.

**Lorraine Burroughs *(Trix)***

**Q: Who is *Trix* and how does she fit into *“Fast Girls”?***

A: *Trix* has been in athletics for many years, and she’s Britain’s number one female 100 metre sprinter. There’s a lot of pressure on her this year to bring home a gold and for her it’s getting towards the latter years of her career so there’s a big big push for her to bring it home. She has injuries so she’s constantly monitoring those, so we see a lot of her own thought process going on throughout the film as she strives to get through.

**Q: Take us through your training regime and diet**

**A:** I live in north London and I’ve been coming to Crystal Palace to train five days a week for the past six weeks now. We start at 9.30am and finish around 12.30pm. We warm up, then we do some strides, we’ll do some hurdles, then we’ll push massive weights. We also do relay practice and different types of running - long distance, then with a one minute break, we go into short distance, punching it out past what you think is possible. Our trainer just makes you keep going and sometimes you feel like you’re going to throw up, but you don’t because you know you’ve just got to get on with it.

The training is the hardest part; during filming we don’t have to do anything as bad as that! Training has been seriously intense, even when we’re at home we have to do other stuff like a thousand sit-ups!

The diet’s not too bad to be honest. It’s been more about adapting to the smaller portions. I realize now that I used to eat like a beast, so now I have to put everything on small side plates to make me feel like its full when actually I’m eating a fist full of rice and meat and no naughty treats but occasionally I do have them… I am taking it very seriously, but I need a treat sometimes!

Learning about nutrition has helped us. You find that you get hungry very often and we’re encouraged to eat every two and a half hours and it gets to a point when you’re starving fifteen minutes before the two and a half hours! When you’re eating the right amount, you get full quickly but you get hungry again in a shorter space of time than you normally would, so it’s working well now.

**Q: Will you take any of the training or diet regime and adopt it after the film?**

A: Definitely. I’d love to because I feel really strong, fit and healthy and my skin is feeling good and my energy’s up. There’s a sprint track near my house - I don’t want my spikes to go to waste! I’ll definitely keep up the abs work because dresses look so much better when your abs are good.

**Q: What’s it been like working with Noel Clarke?**

A: Noel’s great, I really get on with him. He’s a real calming energy to have around because he’s done a lot of films and also with it being his own screenplay, he’s very comfortable around us all. He makes it all a bit of a giggle and that creates a really nice balance. He’s our coach in the film, so we have automatic respect for him but we can have a laugh with him too.

**Q: What’s it been like working with Director Regan Hall?**

A: Regan’s background is advertising and he’s worked with models a lot, so he has all these tricks like telling you to put your chin in a direction which suddenly makes you look like Cleopatra, but you’d have never of thought to do that yourself. It’s amazing! He’s very much about his shots and making it look beautiful.

**Q:** **Tell us about learning to do the relay. Why’s it so difficult?**

A: The relay’s difficult because as an athlete you’re concentrating on yourself and your performance and it’s not about team work, it’s about you and your coach and getting to where you need to get to. When you switch to relay, suddenly you have to think about all these other people and work as a team. It creates this gear change in your mindset. For us it’s been working quite well and possibly better than they thought it was going to be. I think they thought we were going to have to focus on it a lot more than we have. I quite enjoy it, I like working as a team anyway.

**Q:** **What’s been the highlight of filming for you?**

A: I think it’s been seeing the change in me physically. I’ve got a little photo diary and at the beginning I was quite small but without any real definition and now I’m bigger with this crazy definition… my mom said to me ‘where the hell are you going with those arms?’ It’s a real surprise and I never thought I’d get to where I am now and it feels good. One of the highlights of filming was running the 100 metres and keeping up with the real athletes, now that feels really good!

**Q: Who is the most competitive *“Fast Girl”* in the cast?**

A: Dominique Tipper! She’s very ambitious and will do anything to get to where she needs to go and I love that. I think myself too… possibly!

**Q: Who will *“Fast Girls”* appeal to?**

A:I think this film will reach out to a lot of different people. I think it’s a film where girls who see it will want to be us and I think the men who see it will want to be with us!

It’s the Olympics coming up around the time the film’s released, so that usually inspires people to get fit and to feel inspired and I think this film will inspire.

**Dominique Tipper *(Sarah)***

**Q: Who is *Sarah* and how does she fit into the plot?**

A: *Sarah’s* the first reserve on the relay team and there’s a constant need for her to be in with girls. She’s quite close to *Belle* anyway, as they both do hurdles but there’s a part of her that really wants to run the relay, so she does get her chance in the film eventually. It’s like her journey is one of constantly striving to be with the other four girls and when she finally gets the call, it’s like she’s stepped up.

**Q: How was the training and diet regime?**

**A:** Oh wow, the training regime… well, I come from a dance background so I kind of waltzed in thinking I’d be the fittest one here and that it wouldn’t be too hard. Boy did I get a shock – it’s been hardcore!

During the first couple of weeks, I think we all had moments where we asked ourselves why we were doing this to ourselves! We’ve done proper sprint training, weights, abs training, we’ve done everything that normal athletes would do working towards the Olympics or any big competition.

To be honest, the diet was the hardest thing for me. I’ve always eaten healthy food but I’m used to eating whatever portions I want and having the odd treat. This diet regime has been very strict: protein, protein, protein, veg, carbs. We’re constantly watching how often we eat, how much we eat and it gets to the point when you’re asking ‘what's the time, I’ve got to eat now’. That was hard, really hard.

**Q: What’s it been like working with the other girls? Have you bonded?**

**A:** Definitely, you naturally bond through something like this. Especially because we started out training together and we’ve come through the film together. We all kind of started at the same level and I think because we’re all ambitious actors, we came into this with the attitude that we wanted to be the best. We didn’t want to be on screen and have people say ‘they don’t look like athletes’. The first thing I said to Shani our trainer, was ‘OK, whatever I need to do, I want to look like an athlete’. We all came in with that attitude and we had our moments of wavering from it but I think that was always our goal. Training with actual athletes as well, we would look around at them and say to Shani, ‘I need to look like her, I need to run like him’.

**Q: What’s it been like working with Noel Clarke?**

A: Noel’s been great, he’s brought experience to the set and humour as well, we’ve all clicked with him and I think he’s quite enjoying seeing it all come together. I think he’s proud of what we’ve achieved as well.

**Q: What’s it been like working with Director Regan Hall?**

A: Regan’s been great. He seems very aware of exactly what he wants, which is good and he’s very hands-on, which is nice for us. I think he’s very sure of how he wants it to look. I think we are all going to look beautiful thanks to him!

**Q: What makes the relay so difficult?**

 A: We all had a shock learning the relay and realized it’s not as easy as it looks. There’s so much to think about from when you’re down in your starting position to setting how many pigeon steps away the next girl is before you start off, where you have to be to change the baton over, what you have to think of when you’re running towards the next girl…there’s just so much to consider. But it’s all about and timing and trust.

I think we all have a new found respect for the ladies who run relay. A lot of relay teams you see don’t get to train together all the time, so we’ve possibly had more training than some of our relay teams have had.

**Q: Who do you think *Fast Girls* is aimed at?**

A: It’s a great film for young women. It’s also rare to see women in athletics in a film. It’s a chick flick with a bit of grit! It’s not a pansy chick flick – we trained hard and we go hard in the film and there’s real ambition in there.

Men won’t shy away from it either, because it is about athletics and most men like to watch athletics. It’s a feel-good film because we all pull together in the end, so families will enjoy it as well.

**Q: What’s been your highlight so far?**

A: I’ve had a few highlights because this is my first feature film. Just being on set and learning from the girls I’m around has been incredible, I couldn’t wish for a better cast. The fact that all the girls have got on, that’s not an everyday occurrence, we’ve bonded so strongly and I think, I’ll go away with friends from this.

Another highlight is the way my body’s changed and definitely learning about athletics and being more aware of how hard it is and how dedicated these people are. I hope we’ll give them a little something back, you know, because they train like this all year to do something for seconds, they’re so disciplined so that has created an awareness which will always stay with me. Hopefully I’ll apply that awareness to other things that I do.

**Q: Who’s the most competitive “*Fast Girl”* in the cast?**

A: We’re quite playful with it but I am very competitive and I think I’ve taken this quite seriously. I’ve trained a lot with Lashana who plays *Belle* and Lorraine who plays *Trix* and I think we've really bonded. We’re quite competitive between the three of us, we’ll say things like, ‘OK you’re doing that so I'm going to match that’. Lashana and Lorraine are competitive in different ways but I’m probably the most competitive out of all of them!

**Selected Quotes:**

**Noel Clarke…**

**How did you prepare for the role of *Tommy,* coach to the *Fast Girls?***

“By shouting at the girls a lot! I went down to Lee Valley athletics centre a few times to hang out and watch the coaches training some of the Olympic athletes. I modeled *Tommy* on one of the coaches who really stood out. The coach’s role is about making sure their technique is right and making sure that they run the way they’re supposed to.

**How were the *Fast Girls* cast?**

“The main focus was on getting girls who could run *and* act which is hard. Some girls are brilliant actresses but can’t run for shit. Some girls can run, but can’t act. So it was finding girls who could do both authentically and I think that’s what you’ve got with the four main girls here”.

**Who’s the most competitive *Fast Girl* out of the cast?**

“Lashana who plays *Belle*”.

**Who will enjoy *Fast Girls?***

“It’s family viewing. It’s a feel-good film which lots of people in the family can relate to. You can probably bring grandma along to it and she can look at me - I can be her eye candy coz I’ve got the stubble going on in this film!”

“I think it will be something that will make the nation feel good. When they leave the cinema they’ll feel uplifted and the Olympics is just a few weeks after so it will put them in a good mood for that”.

**Bradley James *(Carl)***

**How’s it been working with all these gorgeous girls playing *Carl* their physio?**

“It’s been a real chore. Somebody has to do it, you know, massage their legs and stuff. Playing *Carl* brings that classic adage to mind, the one of it being a tough job but somebody has to do it, that somebody is me and after much consideration I decided that I was the right man for the job so here I am.

**What sort of person is *Carl?***

“Carl’s strictly professional as you’d have to be in such a situation where you’re up close and personal to these attractive female athletes. You have to behave with a modicum of professionalism and Carl’s very professional but needless to say there’s one of the athletes who *Carl’s* taken a bit of a liking too but there are very strict rules and regulations about relationships between staff and athletes so Carl, in his professionalism decides he’s not going there!

**How did you prepare?**

I’ve not been for one run since we started this film! I went to a physio and I spent some time observing the mannerisms and after a couple of days I found myself in the room with some Olympic athletes and Paul the physio would say ‘Hey Bradley, go and stretch these guys out’, I didn’t know what I was doing so I just made some stretches up. I’ve learnt the hard way, I’ve been thrown in at the deep end. I’ve hopefully come out the other side without injuring any of our Olympic prospects for 2012 and hopefully looking like a physio when the camera’s rolling.

**The Cast**

**Biographies**

**Lenora Crichlow**

***“Shania”***

Lenora Crichlow’s professional acting career began alongside Billie Piper in the Century Films/BBC drama *Bella & The Boys* and this was quickly followed by the role of Shirley Moss in 13 Episodes of *The Bill.*

The role that brought her wider acclaim and attention was that of *Sugar*  in the International Emmy award-winning series *Sugar Rush* which was also BAFTA-nominated. On stage she played *Claudine* in Michael Attenborough’s *Big White Fog* at the Almeida and *Delisha* in the Royal Court's original production of *93.2 FM*.

Lenora continued to play guest roles on TV as *Cheen* in *Doctor Who*, *Jude Whiley* in *Kiss Of Death* and *Michelle* in *Casualty,* whilst on film she played the role of *Mandy* in *Wilderness.* She was critically acclaimed for her next role, the portrayal of *Annie* in season one of *Being Human* and the lead role in ITV drama *Collision.* She then went on to film the series lead role of *Ali Redcliffe* in Carnival Film's *Material Girl* for the BBC and reprised the role of *Annie* in season two of *Being Human*.

In 2010 Lenora filmed the comedy pilot *Dapper* for the BBC and also travelled to South Africa to film BBC 3's documentary *Who Is Nelson Mandela* as well as filming series three of *Being Human.*

Prior to *Fast Girls,* Lenora played the guest lead as *Lily Thomson* in new BBC series *Death in Paradise* and she wrapped on series four of *Being Human.*

**Lily James**

***“Lisa”***

Lily James graduated from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2010 and she quickly went on to appear in the film *Clash of the Titans 2* alongside Sam Worthington, Liam Neeson and Rosamund Pike.

Her television credits include *The Secret Diary of a Call Girl* and *Just William*. Theatre credits include *Vernon God Little* at The Young Vic and in the summer of 2011 Lily starred as *Desdemona* in the Sheffield Crucible’s production of *Othello* alongside Dominic West as *Iago* and Clarke Peters as *Othello*. Her performance garnered rave reviews across the British press. In the Daily Mail Quentin Davis wrote: ‘We may have a new star actress on our hands. Her name is Lily James and she left drama school only last year, yet she practically sweeps all before her as Desdemona in this Othello”

Following *Fast Girls* she went into rehearsals for two Martin Crimp plays at The Orange Tree Theatre which open in March 2012.

**Lashana Lynch**

***“Belle”***

Lashana trained at the Arts Educational School of Acting in London. During her first year, she was invited to sing in the third year graduate shows *The Lights* and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* both directed by ChéWalker. She also sung in the Sonnet Walk, 2008 for Shakespeare’s Globe under the direction of Mark Rylance.

In 2009, she won the Laurence Olivier Bursary. On graduating, she recorded the radio play *Cornwell Estate* for BBC Radio 4. Whilst at drama school, she began writing and recording a solo album and is now working on her first play, *Crosswords.* Lashana played the leading role of *Mende Mazer* in *Slave* at the Lowry Theatre where she was nominated for Manchester Evening News award for Best Newcomer. She also played the role of *The Artist* in *Some Like It Hip Hop* at the Sadlers Wells Theatre.

**Lorraine Burroughs**

***“Trix”***

Trained at RADA, Lorraine Burroughs received a 2010 Olivier Award nomination in the Best Actress category for her performance as *Camae* in James Dacre’s *The Mountain Top* and the play went on to receive the Best New Play accolade at the Olivier Awards.

She played *Juliet* in *Romeo & Juliet* and *Bianca* in *Othello* at Shakespeare’s Globe, *Sharon* in Jeremy Herrin’s Royal Court Theatre production of *Off the Endz* and appeared in *War Next Door* and *Fabulation* at the Tricycle Theatre. She toured as *Audrey* in the Birmingham Rep production of *Three Sisters* and also appeared in productions of *Anna & The Tropics, The Kindness of Strangers* at the Hampstead Theatre and Liverpool Everyman respectively.

Her television drama work has included *DCI Banks* for ITV, Sallie Aphrahamian’s *Lip Service* for the BBC, *Shadow Line, Permanently Excluded, New Tricks, Identity, Spooks* and *All About George,* as well as the films *Wide Sargasso Sea, Hex* and *Red Rose.*

**Noel Clarke**

***“Tommy”***

Born in West London, actor, writer and director Noel Clarke was first recognized for his work in Richard Wilson’s Royal Court Theatre production of *Where Do We Live*, for which he received the Most Promising Performer accolade at the 2003 Olivier Awards.

Clarke then took roles in a raft of top TV dramas including Channel 4’s *Metrosexuality*, *Waking the Dead* for the BBC, *A Touch of Frost* and three series of *Auf Weidersehen Pet* and he went on to write and star in Menhaj Huda’s *W10 LDN* for Kudos Productions.

Clarke really came to the attention of British TV audiences when he was cast as *Mickey Smith* in the BBC’s hugely popular *Dr Who* franchise starring Christopher Eccleston, then David Tennant.

 In 2005 Clarke took the lead role of *Sam Peel* in *Kidulthood*, a film produced from his own original screenplay, which Menhaj Huda directed. Clarke won Best Screenplay for *Kidulthood* at the Dinard Film Festival.  He went on to script and reprise his role as *Sam* in the UK smash hit sequel *Adulthood,* this time also taking on the role of director.

Recent credits include: Vertigo Film’s *Doghouse,* *Huge* with Thandie Newton and Eddie Izzard, *Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll* with Andy Serkis, *Heartless* opposite Jim Sturgess and Neil Marshall’s *Centurion* opposite Michael Fassbender.

In 2009, he received the Orange Rising Star Award at the Orange British Academy Film Awards and followed that in 2010 with the hit film *4.3.2.1* which he directed and starred in.

In 2011 Clarke produced two films through his production company Unstoppable Entertainment set for release this year: *The Knot* stars Clarke alongside Mena Suvari and Talulah Riley and *Storage 24* directed byJohannes Roberts.

Clarke was recently cast in J.J. Abrams Star Trek sequel and he is currently filming in the US.

**Phil Davis**

***“Brian”***

Phil Davis is a veteran of British film, TV and theatre and has garnered praise for a variety of eclectic roles over his long and colourful acting career. In 2005 he was BAFTA-nominated for Mike Leigh’s *Vera Drake* and was named Best Actor at the BIFAs and the San Diego Film Critic’s Awards. Most recent film credits include Mike Leigh’s *Another Year, Brighton Rock* for Rowan Joffe, Woody Allen’s *Cassandra’s Dream* and *Notes on a Scandal* directed by Richard Eyre.

Davis was first brought to the attention of cinema audiences with such cult classics as Alan Parker’s *The Wall* and Franc Roddam’s *Quadrophenia.*  Other highlights in his film career include *Nicholas Nickleby,* Lasse Halstrom’s *Casanova,* Antonia Bird’s *Face, Photographing Fairies, In The Name of the Father, High Hopes, Comrades, The Bounty* and *The Canterbury Tales.*

Recent major television drama credits include, *Whitechapel, Silk, Hacks, Merlin,* and *Ashes to Ashes;* as well as *The Fixer, Collision, The Curse of Steptoe, Bleak House, White Teeth, Murder in Mind, The Insiders, Fields of Gold, Births Deaths & Marriages, Tales from the Crypt, Moving Story, Inspector Morse, Paradise Club, The Firm* and *Dead Lucky.*

His extensive theatre work has included *Philistines* at the National Theatre, *Tales from Hollywood* at the Donmar, the Chichester Festival production of *Pygmalian, The Gift, The Gambler, Restoration* at the Royal Court, *Naked Robots* for the RSC, *Not Quite Jerusalem* and *Gotcha/Gimme Shelter* at the Royal Court.

Davis also made his directorial debut with the critically acclaimed feature film *ID* in 1995.

**Dominique Tipper**

***“Sarah”***

Born in East London, 26 year-old Dominique Tipper is half British and half Dominican. At the tender age of three she was enrolled in the Peggy O’Farrell stage school and regularly performed in shows at the Hackney Empire, which gave her an early taste for the world of entertainment.

In high school she was a cross country champion and 1500m gold medal winner, as well as being a British champion cheerleader for five years from the age of 12 for the Ascension Eagles.

At the age of fourteen after singing at a ‘vocal zones’ showcase she won a place in the girl group *Brazen Angels* which she was a member of for four years until leaving to pursue a solo career.

Whilst working on her solo singing career, Dominique decided to take up professional commercial dancing which she’s made a huge success of, working with a host of major artists, including Kylie Minogue, Cheryl Cole, Will Young, Rihanna, Black Eyed Peas, Katy Perry, Nicole Scherzinger, Kanye West, 50 Cent, Ne-Yo and Boyzone, as well as working on the 'Better' Tour, The X Factor TV series (5 years) and X Factor Tour 2007, The Brit Awards, and Mobo Awards to name a few.

She was cast in Rough Cut’s *'5,6,7,8'* at the Royal Court Theatre in January 2011 in the role of *Lorrena* and most recently, filmed the music video to her first promo single *Superstar* which will be launched soon.

**Bradley James**

***“Carl***

Trained at London’s Drama Centre, Bradley James is best known to television audiences for his role as *King Arthur* in the BBC’s hugely popular *Merlin,* and in 2012 he willreprise the role for series five.

Prior to *Merlin,* Bradley appeared in ITV’s *Lewis – Music To Die For* and Tom Harper’s *Disconnected* for the BBC.

**Rupert Graves**

***“David Temple”***

With more than twenty major feature films, over thirty major television dramas and a host of critically acclaimed stage productions to his credit, Rupert Graves is one of the UK’s most esteemed acting talents. He was nominated for an Olivier Award in the Best Actor category for his performance in *Hurly Burly* and received the Best Actor accolade at Montreal in 1996 for *Intimate Relations*.

Recent feature film highlights include Nigel Cole’s *Made In Dagenham, Death at a Funeral* for Frank Oz and *V For Vendetta.* Other selected big screen credits include *The Madness of King George, Damage* directed by Louis Malle, *A Handful of Dust* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread* for Charles Sturridge and *A Room With A View* and *Maurice*  for James Ivory.

Television drama have included *Garrow’s Law, Sherlock, Single Father, God on Trial, Midnight Man, Waking the Dead* and *Ashes to Ashes.* Other highlights include Joe Wright’s *Charles II, Forsyte Saga, Take a Girl Like You, Cleopatra, Blonde Bombshell, Open Fire, The Children, Fortunes of War* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall.*

Major theatre productions include *Hurly Burly, Design for Living,* Patrick Marber’s *The Caretaker* and *Closer*, *The Iceman Cometh* and *The Elephant Man.*

**Hannah Frankson**

***“Rachel”***

An international business graduate, Hannah Frankson was born in Essex and is one of the brightest stars of UK athletics. Hannah trains with Olympian Larry Achike and is a triple jump champion who has competed at national and international level. She also played volleyball for the England juniors. Hannah will compete in London 2012.

**About the filmmakers…**

**Regan Hall**

**Director**

Regan Hall graduated from film school in New Zealand and started his career as an editor in Wellington, home to Peter Jackson’s Weta Workshop. He moved to the UK in 2000 and soon after, started his own production company, Progression Media, producing and directing films for the advertising, fashion and music industries. He soon gained a reputation for his dynamic and collaborative fashion films for clients such as *Dolce & Gabanna*, *Revlon* and *Swarovksi*. Most recently he’s been working on commercials with fashion photographer Mario Testino.

Hall made his drama debut with the emotive and engaging short film *3 Hours,* an Iraqi war drama, showing the human side of war. The award-winning film was shot in Jordan, in Arabic with and Iraqi cast and drew major industry support from the team behind the Academy Award-winning *The Hurt Locker.*

**Damian Jones**

**Producer**

Damian Jones' is currently enjoying the success of his most recently released international feature film, the Academy Award-winning *The Iron Lady,* for which Meryl Streep received the Oscar, the BAFTA and the Golden Globe for Best Actress.

Other major feature film credits as producer include Mat Whitecross's acclaimed biopic of Ian Dury, *Sex&Drugs&Rock&Roll,* for which Andy Serkis was BAFTA-nominated; as well as Nicholas Hytner's *The History Boys*, Noel Clarke's UK teen hits *Adulthood* and *Kidulthood*, Michael Winterbottom's *Welcome to Sarajevo*, Danny Boyle's Millions, *Gridlock'd* starring Tupac Shakur and Greg Araki's *Splendor*.

Other film credits include *Straightheads, Thunderpants, Very Annie Mary, Some Voices, Dancing at the Blue Iguana* and *A Texas Funeral.* In 1990 he received a BAFTA for Peter Hewitt's short *The Candy Show*.

Jones has recently closed a first-look deal with Pathe. His forthcoming production the period drama *Belle*, will commence principal photography in the summer of 2012 under the direction of Amma Asante who has also scripted the film.

**Paul Brett**

**Executive Producer**

Paul Brett is a co-founder of Prescience, the UK’s leading financier of independent film. His film credits number more than two dozen including: *The King’s Speech, 360, Hunky Dory, Trap for Cinderella, Song for Marion, The Guard, Chalet Girl, Mr Nice, Harry Brown* and *U Want me 2 Kill Him?.*

Paul developed and implemented the UK exhibition and distribution strategy over a three year period at the British Film Institute/UK Film Council, leaving to found Prescience with Tim Smith. At the BFI/UKFC, Paul was responsible for BFI's relationships with exhibitors throughout the UK and Northern Ireland, including both art house and commercial cinemas.

Prior to this, he worked for Miramax International as Vice President of European Marketing, as well as Pathé/Guild and CIC (a joint venture between Paramount and Universal).

Paul has worked in the media since leaving university 29 years ago, firstly at Video Arts, (the world’s first audio/visual training company), Catalyst, (the world’s first audio-visual publishing company, backed by Goldcrest), TEN – The Movie Channel (Britain’s first PAY TV company) and Video Collection International, (the world’s first sell through label).

Paul lives in London with his children Polly and Felix as well as a menagerie of domesticated animals.

**Graeme Law**

**Executive Producer**

Graeme Law has held senior finance positions in a range of media and entertainment companies over the past 15 years.  He spent a number of years at Paramount and DreamWorks, where he worked on a variety of films, including those within the major franchises *Shrek, Mission Impossible* and *Transformers*.  Since 2010 he has been Finance Director at Prescience, where he has worked on films such as *The King’s Speech, Harry Brown* and *360.*

**Roy Williams**

**Writer**

Roy Williams began writing plays in 1990 and is now arguably one of the country's leading dramatists. In 2000 he was the joint-winner of The George Devine Award and in 2001 he was awarded the Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright. He was awarded the OBE for Services to Drama in the 2008 Birthday Honours List.

His plays include *Sucker Punch* (Royal Court Theatre, nominated for Olivier Award for Best Play), *Category B* (Tricycle Theatre), *Angel House* (Eclipse Theatre, UK Tour), *Days of Significance* (RSC), *Joe Guy* (Tiata Fahodzi), *There’s Only One Wayne Matthews*(Polka Theatre), *Baby Girl* (NT Connections), *Absolute Beginners*(Lyric Hammersmith), *Little Sweet Thing* (Nottingham Playhouse), *Slow Time* (NT Education), *Fallout* (Royal Court Theatre), *Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads*(NT),*Clubland* (Royal Court Theatre), *The Gift* (Birmingham Rep/Tricycle Theatre), *Local Boy* (Hampstead Theatre), *Souls* (Theatre Centre), *Life Off* (Royal Court) , *Starstruck* (Tricycle, Winner of John Whiting Award, Alfred Fagon Award & EMMA Award for Best Play), *Josie’s Boy* (Red Ladder Theatre Co) and *The No-Boys Cricket Club* (Theatre Royal, Stratford East).

His work for television includes *Let It Snow* (Endor Productions/Sky), *Fallout*  (Company Pictures/ Channel 4, Screen Nation Award for Achievement in Screenwriting), *Offside* (BBC, Winner of BAFTA Children's Film & TV Award for Best Schools Drama) and *Babyfather* (BBC).

For radio, his work includes adaptations of ER Braithwaite's *A Choice of Straws* and *To Sir With Love* and original plays, *Tell Tale* and *Homeboys*.

Roy is currently working on new plays for the National Theatre, Hampstead Theatre, Tricycle Theatre, Almeida and Atlantic Theatre Company, New York as well as a musical for Nitro and a television project for AL Films. He is also adapting his play, *Sucker Punch* for 55 Films/Film4.

**Jay Basu**

**Co-Writer**

Jay Basu’s most current projects include *Heist at Harrys* based on the New York Times article “The Pink Panthers” by David Samuels, *Monsters* for Vertigo/Between The Eyes, *The Dinosaur Project* for StudioCanal, as well as an original feature screenplay for Working Title which is a big scale, contemporary take on *Merlin.* He has also scripted the crime thriller *Bad Traffic* forNick Wechsler and Brilliant Films, with Jonathan Jakubowicz directing, which is currently being cast.

Other projects include the crime thriller *GBH* based on the novel by Ted Lewis, which was set up StudioCanal and Missing In Action Films. Produced by Mia Bays, the script was included on the 2008 Brit List. He is also working on the psychological chiller feature *Within* with Fear Factory, produced by Mia Bays and Colin Pons and Jens Jonsson directing; the action-adventure feature screenplay *The Pier* commissioned by Between The Eyes for Eran Creevy to direct; and the sci-fi thriller TV series *Korridor* written for producer Margery Bone for Bonafide Pictures, which Colin Teague will direct.

Basu is also in development on the action thriller *Kill Switch,* the conspiracy thriller *Relentless* and the India-set *Bombay Running.*

In 2005 he co-wrote the feature *Song of Songs* with director Josh Appignanesi starring Natalie Press. Produced by Gayle Griffiths, the film received the Special Commendation for the Michael Powell Award at the Edinburgh Film Festival and was released by Soda Pictures.

In 2002 he wrote the novel *The Stars Can Wait* published by Jonathan Cape in the UK

and Henry Holt in the US, which was selected as finalist for the LA Times Art Seidenbaum Award and it was a Barnes & Noble top ten first novel of the year.

Most recently, Basu was script editor on *Huge* written and directed by Ben Miller, he was a script editor and Mentor for Microwave, a Film London initiative and has been Visiting Writer at the East 15 Acting School and between 2005-7 was Visiting Tutor in Creative Writing at Goldsmith’s College, University of London**.**

**John Lynch**

**Director of Photography**

John Lynch is an award-winning cinematographer whose talent has spanned music videos and commercials as well as film on both sides of the Atlantic. John grew up in Dublin and started taking pictures at a very young age. He moved to London to train as a camera technician at Panavision and whilst there put together a showreel of his work leading to his first break in advertising, then in music videos with directors such a Chris Cunningham, Walter Stern, Sophie Muller, Vaughan Arnell and Stefan Sedanoui winning him D&AD, Brit and World Music Awards. Major recording artists with whom Lynch has worked include, Bjork and The Prodigy and he was also cinematographer on Robbie Williams’ *Millennium* music video.

His advertising career has included collaborations with Frank Budgen, Frederik Bond, Nicolai Fusilig, Harold Zwart, Rocky Morton, David Kellogg, Chris Cunningham, Stephen Daldry, Peter Cattaneo, Daniel Barber and Daniel Kleinman. He received a Silver Lion award for Cinematography for his work on the Peugeot 307 commercial and a Best Cinematography BTA Craft Award for the the Levi’s ‘Twist’. Other clients have included Volkswagen, Puma, Adidas, Walkers, Sky TV and T-Mobile.

John shot his first feature length film “Pandemonium”, directed by Julian Temple, in 1998 for which he won the Critics’ Choice Cinematography Award at The Toronto International Film Festival. He has since shot two further features and various short films including *Love Hate* directed by the Ritzen Brothers starring Ben Wishaw and Hayley Atwell. Documentaries have included *Red, White & Blues* for Mike Figgis and *The Real Godfather* for the BBC directed by Benito Montorio.

**Andy Blake & Miss Molly**

**Costume Designers**

Designing team Andy Blake and Miss Molly recently collaborated on feature films *The Knot* and *Storage 24.* Other selected credits for Andy Blake include *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood, 4.3.2.1, Sinchronicity, Knife Edge, Out of Time, Jenny, Your Number’s Up* and *There I Am.* Selected credits for Miss Molly include *Break Clause, Freestyle* and *Rough Cut.*

**Darren Evans**

**Hair & Make-up Designer**

Feature film credits as a hair and make-up designer for Darren Evans include *Streetdance 3D, Streetdance 2, The Broken, The Walker, Keeping Mum* and *Chromophobia.*

**Lewis Albrow**

**Editor**

Lewis Albrow is an advanced FCP editor who has cut TV dramas, music promos, and documentaries, with TV credits for the BBC, ITV and C4. He worked in-house at a number of production companies before embarking on a freelance career and setting up his own FCP suite in West London.

Selected highlights amongst his feature and short film credits include Regan Hall’s *3 Hours, The Hunt for Gollum, A Weekend in Venice, Night Junkies, 12 In A Box, Breakin’ The Cycle, Honey & Razorblades, All The Children Are Sleeping, Hip Hop Opera, First* and *Bad Apple;* TV specials for *T4* and Trinny & Susannah, and the documentaries *Call Girls: The Truth, Paul McCartney: Ecce Cor Meum, The Making of Shooting Dogs,* as well as documentaries with *James Blunt, Christian Slater* and *Nick Broomfield.* Albrow has also edited a host of music videos, commercials, trailers and EPKs.

**Richard Canavan**

**Composer**

Over the past five years, composer Richard Canavan has been scoring award winning documentaries and short films. In 2009 *Red Sands* won Film of the Festival and Best British Short at Raindance, as well as securing a nomination for a British Independent Film Award. Richard scored Peter King's *Karosta* which was awarded Best Documentary Short at Abu Dhabi Film Festival in 2010. More recently Richard has provided music for the Sky Atlantic series *Britain and Ireland from the Sky*, with two further Sky Atlantic series coming later in the year.

**BFI FILM FUND**

The BFI Film Fund supports bold and exciting British films.

Films currently in production include Nick Murphy's *Blood*, Rufus Norris' *Broken*, Mike Newell's *Great Expectations*, Omid Nooshin's *Last Passenger*, Sophie Fiennes' *The Pervert's Guide To Ideology*, Martin McDonagh's *Seven Psychopaths*, Scott Graham's *Shell,* Ben Wheatley's *Sightseers*, Andrew Kötting's *Swandown*, Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* and Eran Creevy's *Welcome To The Punch.*

Recent releases supported by the BFI Film Fund include Pawel Pawlikowski's *The Woman In The Fifth*, James Watkins' *The Woman in Black*, Phyllida Lloyd's Academy Award® winning *The Iron Lady*, Steve McQueen's BAFTA nominated *Shame*, Lynne Ramsay's *We Need To Talk About Kevin*, Carol Morley's *Dreams of a Life*, Andrea Arnold's *Wuthering Heights* and Paddy Considine's BAFTA award winning *Tyrannosaur.*

Upcoming releases include Michael Winterbottom's *Trishna,* Varon Bonicos' *A Man's Story*, Max Giwa and Dania Pasquini's *Streetdance 2 3D*, Lasse Hallström's *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen*, Ol Parker's *Now Is Good* and Ken Loach's *The Angel's Share*.

In the official selection at the Sundance Film Festival in January were Jon Wright's *Grabbers* and James Marsh's *Shadow Dancer*. The latter also screened at the 2012 Berlinale the following month.

The BFI's ambition is to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

. Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema

. Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations

. Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK

. Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work

. Promoting British film and talent to the world

. Growing the next generation of filmmakers and audiences

**STUDIOCANAL**

STUDIOCANAL is the pan European film, production and sales distribution arm of French media group, Canal+. The UK arm, formerly known as Optimum Releasing, has established a reputation for an innovative approach to distribution and has enjoyed success with a varied mix of film titles across all genres. A passion for film and commitment to creativity is central to all of STUDIOCANAL’s activity.

2011 has seen the company enjoy its biggest ever box office returns in the UK with successes like Jaume Collet-Sera’s Unknown, Duncan Jones’ Source Code, Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's The Tourist and Tomas Alfredson's Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy. 2012 will start equally strongly with Madonna’s WE and Roman Polanski’s Carnage. Past theatrical releases include Guillermo del Toro's Pan's Labyrinth, Paul Haggis' In the Valley of Elah, Marjane Satrapi's Persepolis, Garth Jennings' Son of Rambow, Darren Aronofsky's The Wrestler, Woody Allen's Vicky Cristina Barcelona, Armando Iannucci's In the Loop, Anne Fontaine's Coco avant Chanel, Kathryn Bigelow's The Hurt Locker, Jacques Audiard's A Prophet, Roman Polanski's The Ghost, Chris Morris' Four Lions and Francois Ozon's Potiche.

Established in 2004, STUDIOCANAL Home Entertainment has quickly become one of the leading distributors in the UK Home Entertainment sector, boasting an active catalogue of more than 1500 titles. With sales handled by its joint venture Elevation, consistently ranked amongst the top ten UK distributors, STUDIOCANAL Home Entertainment has aggressively grown its market share year on year by combining classic library titles with critically and commercially successful new releases.

On the production front, STUDIOCANAL’s plans remain ambitious. Rowan Joffe's Brighton Rock starring Sam Riley, Andrea Riseborough and Helen Mirren and Joe Cornish's Attack the Block, the first project to emerge from the pact with Big Talk, have been released. Nick Murphy's debut feature The Awakening starring Rebecca Hall, Dominic West and Imelda Staunton was released in cinemas 11 November 2011. Mattias Hoene’s Cockneys vs. Zombies is in post-production, while Ben Stassen’s Sammy’s Adventures: The Secret Passage is in production. Warp X has been established with Warp Films, BFI and Film4. The first two films from Warp X are feature directorial debuts from Paddy Considine with Tyrannosaur, a double prize-winner at Sundance this year, Richard Ayoade’s hit Submarine, and Ben Wheatley’s Kill List.

**AEGIS**

Aegis Film Fund is one of a number film funds advised and managed by Prescience. Aegis Film Fund provides debt finance to international independent films its focus is on cash enhancement, with returns in excess of 10% p.a.. Prescience was co-founded in 2005 by Tim Smith and Paul Brett, who each have over 20 years of experience in the film industry. Through its managed funds Prescience provides debt, equity, development and bridging finance to the independent film market. Recent films financed include: Tom Hooper's *The King's Speech,*  John Michael McDonagh's *The Guard*, Phil Trail's *Chalet Girl***,** and Marc Evans' *Hunky Dory* and Horrid Henry 3D directed by Nick Moore.

**EALING METRO INTERNATIONAL**

Ealing Metro is a leading UK-based independent sales agent focussed on delivering quality, commercial films to the global market.

Its joint ownership by the most prestigious and oldest film studio in the UK, Ealing Studios, and leading film financier, Prescience, uniquely positions Ealing Metro as an international sales and distribution company that can deliver an integrated solution for film makers.