

# THE PARAGON

ATHLETIC CLUB





# THE PARAGON

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MICHAEL DUIGNAN

OFFICIAL WEBSITE

OFFICIAL STILLS

83 mins. / Comedy / New Zealand / English / 2023

## CONTACT

### NATIONAL PUBLICITY

Bright Iris Film Co.

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# LOGLINE

The victim of a hit-and-run accident trains with a witchy disciplinarian to unleash his latent psychic powers and take revenge on the driver in this New Zealand fantasy comedy, a hilarious and cosmic rift in space-time.

# SYNOPSIS

Do you want to see the unseen? Dutch (Benedict Wall) may look like just another defeated and washed-up loser, but behind his pissed-off exterior lurks a hyperdimensional being of exceptional promise. His wife left him, his career as a tennis coach is floundering, and he would give anything to find the driver of the silver Toyota Corolla who hit him and drove off a year ago—the event that initiated Dutch’s downward spiral. Enter Lyra (Florence Noble), a witchy disciplinarian who offers to help Dutch unleash his latent psychic powers and break free from the illusion of linear time. After a crash course in telelocation and astral projection, the unlikely psionic prodigy is ready for his quest of cosmic revenge, but Lyra has other plans: she needs Dutch’s help to find a mysterious crystal known as the Paragon before it falls into the hands of her evil brother Haxan (Jonny Brugh) and his mind slaves. Everything converges towards the singularity in Michael Duignan’s feature debut, a hilarious rift in space-time.



# ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

The Paragon was shot over 13 days in May-April of 2022 in New Lynn and Bethells Beach in Auckland. It was shot on a budget of approx. \$25,000 made possible by generous contributions from friends and family. The film was created by the incredible hard work and enthusiasm of a small team of committed filmmakers.







# CAST

<b>Dutch</b>	Benedict Wall
<b>Lyra</b>	Florence Noble
<b>Emily</b>	Jessica Grace Smith
<b>Beth</b>	Michelle Ang
<b>Oates</b>	Shadon Meredith
<b>Haxan</b>	Jonny Brugh
<b>Enoch</b>	Cameron Rhodes
<b>Vinnie</b>	Chloe White
<b>Lucky</b>	Lucky Lee Morton



## **BENEDICT WALL (DUTCH)**

Benedict Wall is an actor, writer and director born in Auckland, New Zealand. He has a Bachelor's Degree In Journalism from the Auckland University of Technology. After university Benedict studied acting at the Neighbourhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in New York City.

Benedict has worked widely in theatre, television and film. His recent film performances include THE PRETEND ONE, a romantic Australian feature film shot on location in outback New South Wales, and The Flood, a gritty Australian western released last year. Benedict also stars in SHADOW IN THE CLOUD directed by Roseanne Liang, which won the Audience Award at Midnight Madness at TIFF in 2020. Most recently Benedict starred in the US feature film NO EXIT directed by Damien Power.

Most notably in television Benedict played pivotal villain "Jones" in Peter Duncan's critically acclaimed OPERATION BUFFALO opposite Oscar Nominee James Cromwell which screened on the ABC in Australia and Netflix worldwide. Benedict's other television credits include UNDER BELLY BADNESS, HOME AND AWAY, PANTHERS, and he has recently been cast in a lead role in the Sky Original series MILES FROM NOWHERE.

## **FLORENCE NOBLE (LYRA)**

Florence created sketch comedy BLIND PILOT, in which she played various acerbic characters based on herself. This jump started her acting career. She played victimised intern in award-winning comedy series THE JAQUIE BROWN DIARIES by Gerard Johnstone. She collaborated with Aussie comic legend, Nick Boshier, including the 2014 Emmy award winning Australian comedy 7DaysLater and acting, writing and directing viral comedy MEANWHILE ON EARTH.

Her short film THINGS ARE GOING REALLY WELL did the festival circuit including the Melbourne International Film Festival, where she attended the 2015 Accelerator Program. She co-wrote and directed comedy web series, WAIHEKE REPUBLIQUE. She has directed many comic commercials including the latest successful campaigns for Tower Insurance and international trading app, Pepperstone.

Her unique style of irreverent comedy has gained her much notoriety and critical attention. She was nominated for Best Emerging Talent at the 2016 CAANZ Axis Awards. In 2020, she received a comedy scholarship from the New Zealand Film Commission.

## **SHADON MEREDITH (OATES)**

Shadon is a New Zealand born Sāmoan from Wellington. He trained at Toi Whakaari and graduated in 2009. Shadon has extensive experience in theatre, having worked locally and internationally. Most recently Shadon has graced our screens playing the role of Andy in Season 2 of Emmy award-winning show, RŪRANGI and upcoming tv series DOUBLE PARKED. He has worked on feature films SHUT EYE and DARKEST LIGHT which are all set to release this year in 2023. Shadon is now making waves as a writer and is writing for Toi Time and working on his screenplay PETER PETER.

## **JESSICA GRACE SMITH (EMILY)**

Jessica is an actor who has starred in multiple series and films including HOME & AWAY, SIONE'S WEDDING 2, WESTSIDE and most recently she has been cast in a lead role in TVNZ's new series THE BISHOP.

## **MICHELLE ANG (BETH)**

Michelle Ang is a multi-hyphenate creative. As an Emmy nominated actress, her work spans film and television from the USA, Australia and New Zealand including FEAR THE WALKING DEAD and STAR WARS: THE BAD BATCH. She has produced, written and directed documentary, comedy, shorts and feature films and just wrapped a psychological TV episode. She will next be seen on upcoming New Zealand television series HOMEBOUND 3.0.

## **JONNY BRUGH (HAXAN)**

Jonny Brugh is a comic screen actor, writer and director and producer based in Auckland, New Zealand. He is best known for his role as Deacon in the 2014 cult comedy WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS and most recently as Rapu The Sun God in THOR: LOVE AND THUNDER. In 2021 Jonny brought together a crack team of film making talent to produce the short film PROOF the pilot project for his film company Heimlich Manoeuvre Ltd.

## **CAMERON RHODES (ENOCK)**

Rhodes graduated from Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School in 1987 with a Diploma in Acting. He has appeared in various TV shows (including XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS) and films including THE ROYAL TREATMENT, THE LORD OF THE RINGS, MR. PIP, and HOUSEBOUND.

## **CHLOE WHITE (VINNIE)**

Chloe White, has worked in the screen industry as an actor from the age of three, starting out in TV commercials. Her first role in a movie was age 6 where she played Lina in RUNAWAY MILLIONAIRES –

Other projects to date include CREAMERIE, and more recently THE PARAGON.







# CREW

**Written & Directed by**  
**Produced by**  
**Director of Photography**  
**Costume Designer**  
**Production Designer**  
**M/U Designer / MU FX**  
**Camera Assist**  
**LX / Gaffer**  
**Sound Recordist**  
**Boom Op**  
**Additional Sound**

Michael Duignan  
Lissy Turner and Michael Duignan  
Michael Duignan  
Lissy Turner  
Gavin Walker  
Levonne Scott  
Finn McGowan  
Yusei Tada  
Flynn Harris  
Adam Curlewis  
Shamir Rodriguez  
Ash Bartley  
Daavid Peterson

## **Executive Producers**

Benedict Wall  
Jessica Grace-Smith  
Francis McEntee  
Michael Sweet  
Helen Duignan  
Josh Blackmore  
Paul Newfield  
Michael Lonsdale  
Hugh Calvely  
Thomas Appleton



## **MICHAEL DUIGNAN (WRITER/DIRECTOR)**

Michael Duignan was born and raised in Wellington, New Zealand. He studied Film, Theatre and Philosophy at Victoria University. His first short film A NEW WAY HOME premiered at Melbourne film festival. After graduating from the Masters program at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS), Michael's dramatic short TRUANT premiered at the New York Film Festival. Truant went on to play in competition at over a dozen festivals. Michael has directed TV commercials all over the world for clients such as Mastercard, NRMA, Cadbury and Frucor. He has directed numerous episodes of top rating and critically acclaimed shows THE CULT, GO GIRLS, THE BLUE ROSE as well as cult kids TV show POWER RANGERS. He has made documentaries, music videos and cooking shows. His comedy short TEN THOUSAND DAYS was awarded Vimeo Staff Pick and screened all over the world. THE PARAGON is his debut feature film.

## **LISSY TURNER (PRODUCER/COSTUME DESIGNER)**

With a vast array of screen credits - including award-nominated Costume Designer on Gerard Johnstone's debut feature, Housebound, and Costume Supervisor on award-winning TV drama, THE PANTHERS (Best Costume). Lissy recently co-produced her first short film PROOF by writer/director, Jonny Brugh. Lissy was then offered the opportunity to utilise her skills and produce her first feature length film, The Paragon, by writer/director, Michael Duignan.







# ABOUT DOPPELGÄNGER RELEASING™

Doppelgänger Releasing™ is the alternative, genre-inspired label of Music Box Films. Launched in 2013, Doppelgänger Releasing supports cutting-edge films that push the boundaries of genre filmmaking. Highlights include Cameron and Colin Cairnes' Slamdance award-winner **100 Bloody Acres**, Lukas Feigelfeld's German horror film **Hagazussa**, Kiyoshi Kurosawa's Japanese horror **Penance**, Fabrice Du Welz's psychosexual thriller **Alleluia**, SXSW and Fantasia Festival favorite **Heavy Trip**, and the Blu-ray debut of Wes Craven's 1978 cult classic **Summer of Fear**. The label most recently co-released SXSW award-winner **Raging Grace** with Brainstorm Media. In 2023, Music Box Films relaunched the Doppelgänger Releasing™ label, committing to more experimental and genre films. **Crumb Catcher** is the first of several releases for the label in 2024.

For more information, please visit [www.doppelgangerreleasing.com](http://www.doppelgangerreleasing.com).

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