



NORTHERN VOICES

The Arbor

The Arbor

Director: Clio Barnard

©: Artangel Media Ltd., UK Film Council

Production Company: Artangel

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UK Film Council's New Cinema Fund,

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Executive Producer: Michael Morris

Producer: Tracy O'Riordan

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Production Co-ordinator: Jess Gormley

Production Accountant: Helen Bingham

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Additional Filming Location Manager: Asha Sharma

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Ameenah Ayub

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2nd Assistant Director: Matt Grimwood

3rd Assistant Director: Alex Grasham

Script Supervisor: Sylvia Parker

Casting: Amy Hubbard

Casting Assistants: Julia Gruen, Samantha Colley

Screenplay: Clio Barnard

Director of Photography: Ole Birkeland

Additional Filming 2nd Unit Camera Operator:

David McCormick

1st Assistant Camera: Jason Walker

2nd Assistant Camera: Adam Scarth

Additional Filming 2nd Unit Assistant Camera:

Matt Howard

Gaffer: Michael Onder

Grip: Steve Sheppard

Stills Photographers: Nick Wall, Susanna Wyatt

Visual Effects by: The Bluff Hampton Company

(Visual Effects Producer: Piers Hampton;

Visual Effects Supervisor: Sean Farrow)

Graphic Artist: Alex Toomey

Editors: Nick Fenton, Daniel Goddard

Production Designer: Matthew Button

Art Director: Daniela Faggio

Standby Art Director: Luke Gledsdale

Additional Filming Standby Art Director:

Emma Clough

Art Department Co-ordinator: George Mizen

Set Decorator: Cathy Featherstone

Prop Master: Marius Pogaceanu

Costume Designer: Matthew Price

Wardrobe Supervisor: Eloise Park

Make-up & Hair Designer: Sue Wyburgh

Make-up/Hair Assistants: Maxine Mitchell,

Jane Oginsky, Helen Gant

Additional Filming Make-up Assistant: Kavita Kaul

Digital Main Titles & End Roller Design: Matt Curtis

Composers: Harry Escott, Molly Nyman

Clio Barnard on 'The Arbor'

Let's talk about Andrea Dunbar first, and why she was of interest to you, in terms of where you come from yourself.

I grew up in Yorkshire, near Bradford, so it was a local place to go and see bands or films or go ice-skating, and I'm that same generation as Andrea Dunbar, so when I saw *Rita, Sue and Bob Too*, Rita and Sue seemed very familiar to me. They were like girls I was at school with. I really liked the friendship between the two girls and the fact that the film is very unmoralistic about them enjoying sex with this guy. They were the sort of girls at school that you looked up to because they were very experienced. I recognise that part of the world and the clothes they were wearing – it's my era. And I really like the writing, the vitality of it. I really like Alan Clarke's work too, though I don't think *Rita, Sue and Bob Too* is his greatest film – it's not his most innovative piece of work.

I'm not really a theatre person – I've never seen *Rita, Sue and Bob Too* in the theatre. But I was curious to read it. It had been reprinted with *A State Affair* [Robin Soans' 2000 follow-up to the play], which revisits Butterworth a decade after Andrea Dunbar's death – and which I didn't know anything about. I didn't know about verbatim theatre either. But the techniques of verbatim theatre related to [my short film] *Random Acts of Intimacy*, where I'd used this technique of actors lip-synching to voices gathered in interviews, and the reason I did that was to create a deliberate gap between reality and representation, or at least make you aware of the gap. What's interesting is that verbatim theatre aspires to be a kind of documentary theatre. I was interested that it would do the opposite in my bits of film.

The opposite being?

The opposite being deliberately making you aware of the illusion rather than trying to collapse it or make it smaller. It widens the gap – or draws attention to the gap. I was also interested in that idea of returning to the same place – the idea that a play or a film constructs an ending, but places don't have endings, they continue. So the initial idea was to go back a third time, another decade on, to see what had changed, but also to reflect on the previous representations of the estate. In a way I didn't really set out to make a film about Andrea Dunbar – that kind of emerged in the process of meeting people and doing interviews.

And then the film sort of follows on with Andrea Dunbar's children.

There's lots of different layers in the film, so it becomes quite complicated to describe...

Please take us through them, one at a time.

There are three elements to the film. There are actors that are synched to the voices of people gathered in interview – who are Andrea Dunbar's family, and in particular her children. And there's also a performance of her play *The Arbor* on Brafferton Arbor, the street where she grew up. It was her first play, which she wrote when she was 15. And the third element is archive footage of Andrea and her family. Some of it is Andrea when she's 18 years old with her

Music Performed by:
 members of the Samphire Band
Music Supervisor: Lucy Bright
Music Recording Engineer: Ian Wood
Music Mixed by: Harry Escott
Sound Designer: Tim Barker
Interviews Recorded by: Clio Barnard
Sound Recordist: Tim Barker
Boom Operator: Alan MacFeeley
Additional Filming Boom Operator:
 Gernot Fuhrmann
Re-recording Mixer: Richard Davey
Foley Supervisor: Tim Alban
Foley Editor: Chris Treble
Sales & Distribution Consultant: Dhiraj Mahey
Archive Footage courtesy of: BBC Motion Gallery,
 ITN Source
Filmed with: Red One Digital Camera
Camera & Grip Equipment: Ice Films
Lighting Equipment: Arri Lighting Rental
Digital Grading by: LipSync Post
Cast:
 Manjinder Virk (*Lorraine Dunbar*)
 Neil Dudgeon (*Steve Saul*)
 Monica Dolan (*Ann Hamilton*)
 Danny Webb (*Max Stafford-Clark & the father*)
 Christine Bottomley (*Lisa Thompson*)
 Natalie Gavin (*the girl*)
 Kathryn Pogson (*Pamela Dunbar*)
 George Costigan (*Jimmy 'the Wig'*)
 Matthew McNulty (*Andrew Dunbar*)
 Jonathan Jaynes (*David Dunbar*)
 Robert Emms (*young David*)
 Kate Rutter (*the mother*)
 Gary Whitaker (*Gary Whitaker*)
 Jimi Mistry (*Yousaf*)
 Parvani Lingiah (*young Lorraine*)
 Liam Price (*Billy*)
 Robert Haythorne (*Fred*)
 Josh Brown (*policeman*)
 Jamie Timlin (*Jamie Timlin*)
 Richard Dunbar (*Peter*)
 Scott Brandon (*Chris*)
 Anne-Marie Barwell (*Gemma Norman*)
 Shelly Norman (*Shelly Norman*)
 Daphne Gormley (*Kaitlin*)
 Lizzie Roper (*Kathy Dunbar*)
 Chantelle Dunbar (*Karen*)
 Moey Hassan (*bus conductor*)
 Gemma Booth (*Cath*)
 Maxine Crome (*Maureen*)
 Kulvinder Ghir (*Rafee*)
 Taron Tutt (*Saif*)
 UK 2010©
 94 mins

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baby daughter Lorraine, who becomes the focus of my film as it develops. And also Andrea when she was 28, talking about her work almost retrospectively although she was still so young, her career was almost over because she died when she was 29.

What about the tension between you as an artist and her as a writer? On one hand, you're representing her work, but you're framing it in a particular way so that it's also your work – you have to take possession of it yourself. Did you think about that, or did you just go with it?

I suppose I just went with it. There's something she does in her play *The Arbor* where the girl, who is essentially Andrea, introduces us to a scene by looking straight at the audience – or in this case, looking straight down the lens. To me, that was the equivalent of what I was doing with the lip-synching: it's a direct address – the interviewees look straight down the lens, something you wouldn't get in a conventional talking-head documentary, where the eye-line would be slightly off.

Andrea's daughters have a very different account of her. I was very interested in that. If there's a common thread through my work, it's about the relationship between memory and imagination. They both had very different memories of Andrea. Lisa, her younger daughter, remembers her as a writer who would lock herself away in the bedroom to write. Whereas Lorraine's memory is completely different – it's that her mum was going out drinking and it was all abusive parenting and neglect. And I suppose the tensions in Andrea's life were partly about having represented that community and her family through these plays – and the difficulties of then continuing to live in this community, having exposed them, as well as herself, to the world. I definitely related to those tensions.

What I found really brilliant about her letters to Max Stafford-Clark, the director of her plays, was that they were all about childcare. You know, 'I need someone to look after Lorraine, and maybe I can bring her down to rehearsals with me.' I admire her for being upfront about it and for producing the amount of work that she produced, being a single parent with very young children and in that environment.

I was wondering whether making this film has in any way altered your view of the type of work you might do in the future.

Yeah, I'm not going back to my bottom drawer to take out scripts I've written in the past. It's made a massive change. To some extent, I think it's changed my politics, in that it's strengthened some kind of resolve somewhere. I haven't really fully processed it yet. There's a lot of things that I didn't know about in a first-hand way that I know about now – that's made a massive difference.

Interview by Nick James, *Sight and Sound*, November 2010

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