

From the Executive Producer of *FRIENDS*

BEST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL THINGS

A film by Garrett Zevgetis

91 min / English / 2016 / Documentary / Digital / USA



FIRST RUN FEATURES

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LOGLINE

In a celebration of outcasts everywhere, a precocious young blind woman disappears into quirky obsessions and isolation. With humor and bold curiosity, she chases love and freedom in a surprising sex-positive community on her path to self-discovery.

SYNOPSIS

Off a dirt road in rural Maine, a precocious 20-year-old woman named Michelle Smith lives with her mother Julie. Michelle is quirky and charming, legally blind and diagnosed on the autism spectrum, with big dreams and varied passions. Searching for connection, Michelle explores love and empowerment outside the limits of “normal” through a provocative sex-positive community. Michelle’s joyful story of self-discovery celebrates outcasts everywhere.

ABOUT THE FILM

In 2009, director Garrett Zevgetis googled the word “Beauty.” He had been working on a number of darker-themed documentaries and was determined to find an uplifting story for a future project. The search returned a poignant Helen Keller quote that led Garrett to Perkins School for the Blind outside Boston, a renowned institution where a feature documentary had never before been made. He began volunteering at Perkins and on the last day of his scheduled term a bubbly young student introduced herself – Michelle had found him. Over five years of filming and editing followed, and along the way the film was supported by IFP’s Independent Film Week, LEF Foundation Moving Image Fund, and Independent Film Festival Boston’s Work-In-Progress Award. The filmmaking team devoted to telling Michelle’s unique story grew to include the Emmy-winning creator of FRIENDS and Oscar-winning editor of INOCENTE, WAR/ DANCE, and TWINSTERS. In March 2016, BEST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL THINGS had its World Premiere at SXSW Film Festival.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We have all felt like an outcast. I set out to share an authentic and artistic first-person account of an exuberant young woman who faces extraordinary challenges on her journey to adulthood. Michelle's unique story is about growing up and embracing all that life has to offer with unbridled optimism, even in the face of significant obstacles. Through Michelle we discovered the startling lack of opportunities available for all people to fully engage in our society, and the need to bridge the ocean of fear and misunderstanding that infuse attitudes toward people considered "other." The beautiful differences that exist between all of us make up our common humanity.

— *Garrett Zevgetis*

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Garrett Zevgetis (Director/Producer) is a Boston-based documentary filmmaker focusing on fascinating people and social change. Garrett grew up in Kissimmee, Florida, served in the U.S. Navy during Desert Storm, and earned an MFA in Media Art from Emerson College. He has directed several short films, including *A MERCENARY TALE* which premiered at the Boston International Film Festival and was distributed worldwide by Ouat Media. Garrett has also worked at PBS' *FRONTLINE*, at WGBH under acclaimed producer Judith Vecchione, and as a producer for the nationally syndicated public radio program, *RADIO OPEN SOURCE WITH CHRISTOPHER LYDON*. He was recently named one of "10 Filmmakers To Watch" by *The Independent* magazine.

For its entire ten year run, **Kevin Bright (Executive Producer)** was an Executive Producer behind the Emmy Award winning television series *FRIENDS*. Kevin additionally directed more than 50 episodes of the show including all 10 season finales. He produced and directed other programs including *DREAM ON*, *JOEY* and *VERONICA'S CLOSET*. While teaching at Emerson College in Boston, Kevin attended a Celtics game where he heard the Perkins School Chorus sing the National Anthem. Inspired by their performance Bright began a relationship with Perkins and developed a film production class for the visually impaired which was featured on NBC's *ROCK CENTER*. A student in his first class was Michelle Smith. He has been involved with the film project since it began. Bright is currently Founding Director of Emerson College Los Angeles.

Jeff Consiglio (Editor/Producer) has worked as a director, producer, editor and creative consultant on films for over 30 years. Jeff edited the Academy Award Winning documentary film *INOCENTE* (Best Documentary Short Subject, 2013). Jeff earned his first Oscar nomination for the feature documentary *WAR/DANCE* in 2008, which also won Best Directing at Sundance and an Emmy Award. For HBO, Jeff edited *LIFE ACCORDING TO SAM*, which premiered at Sundance and was shortlisted for the Academy Award. He produced and edited the feature documentary *TWINSTERS*, which premiered at SXSW in 2015 and won the Special Jury award for Editing.

Ariana Garfinkel (Producer) is an independent film producer and a 2015 FilmHouse Resident at the San Francisco Film Society. She produced the awardwinning feature documentary *BOYS OF SUMMER*, distributed by Tribeca Film and broadcast by ESPN, PBS and Sundance Global. She is currently producing a narrative feature film titled *GLASS* by Lily Baldwin, with whom she has produced two acclaimed short films. Other credits include documentaries *NUNS ON THE BUS*, *SYMPHONY OF THE SOIL*, *WRENCHED* and *TRUMBO*. Ariana spent ten years working in New York City at Miramax Films, Tribeca Productions and Reno Productions. She graduated from Stanford University.

Jordan Salvatoriello (Cinematographer/Producer) is an awardwinning media artist and journalist with a BS in Journalism from Boston University and MFA in Media Art from Emerson College, where she received Emerson's Graduate Program Award for Creative Excellence. Her documentary work includes projects on a variety of international issues, including education, trauma, gender issues, and healthcare. Her short film, *GRACELAND GIRLS*, won the Director's Guild of America Jury Prize, Gold

Circle Award from the Caucus for Producers, Writers & Directors and was nominated for a Student Academy Award. Drawing on her desire to tell real stories of social good, Jordan also currently serves as Public Relations Manager for Make-A-Wish.

Sarah Ginsburg (Cinematographer/Additional Editor) grew up in the magical Midwest town of Columbia, Missouri. She studied Film Production at Emerson College in Boston, where she lives and works as a documentary filmmaker today. She has worked on various documentary projects, including editing on HOLLOW, an interactive documentary which was nominated for a 2014 Emmy and won a 2014 Peabody Award. Sarah is the co-creator and cohost of She Does podcast, a series featuring women in media and the different routes they've taken.

Tyler Strickland (Composer) is a film composer and songwriter based in Los Angeles. Tyler's scores have accompanied acclaimed narrative and documentary films such as AUDRIE & DAISY (Sundance 2016), THE GENIUS OF MARIAN (Tribeca 2013), TOUGH LOVE (Full Frame 2014), FRESH DRESSED (Sundance 2015), THE MANY SAD FATES OF MR. TOLEDANO (Tribeca 2015) and OVERBURDEN (Full Frame 2015). His music can also be found in Clio, Webby and Addy award-winning commercial campaigns for Google, YouTube, HBO, Burberry, and Lenovo.

END CREDITS

Directed by
Garrett Zevgetis

Produced by
Ariana Garfinkel
Jeff Consiglio

Edited by
Jeff Consiglio

Additional Editing
Sarah Ginsburg

Cinematography by
Sarah Ginsburg
Jordan Salvatoriello

Produced by
Garrett Zevgetis
Jordan Salvatoriello

Original Music
Tyler Strickland

Executive Producers
Kevin S. Bright
Claudia Bright

Additional Camera
Shaun Clarke
Daniel Jacobs
Ben Pender-Cudlip
Ethan Goldhammer
Elena Rossini

Sound Recordists
Ross Matthei
Bradford Kneger
Brian Misiewicz

Graphic Design
Claire Miyamoto

Post Production Services &
Mastering
Fancy Film Post Services

Finishing Supervisor
William B. Macomber

Finishing Producer
Eleanor Nett

Post Production Coordinator
Ed Schuerman

Colorist
Robert Crosby
Neptune Post

Audio Description
Audio Eyes

Closed Captioning
Axium Digital

Transcription
Rev.com
JP Dubuque
Melissa Coleman

Production Assistant
Fran McCarthy

Post Production Sound
Services
Puget Sound, Inc

Supervising Sound Editor &
Re-Recording Mixer
Joe Milner

Foley Recording Services
Sound Troop

Foley Artist
Miguel Barbosa

Foley Mixer
Diego Suarez Staub

Legal Counsel
Justine Jacob

Clearance Counsel
Lisa Callif
Donaldson & Callif, LLP

Music Clearances
Brienne Rose

Fiscal Sponsor
Filmmakers Collaborative

Distribution Advisory
Services
provided by Preferred
Content

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Perkins School for the Blind
Special Thanks
Corinne Grousbeck

In Loving Memory of
John Zevgetis
Deric Askins
Eli Eckman
Jerome T. Consiglio
Spencer Ross
Dora
Eileen O'Hagan
Scott Symonds
Anastasia Kyprianos
Mischa Sobel
Richard Mahaney
MaryAnne Barbella
Alexia Toublanc
Jake Hoffman
Monica Steinert
Dylan James Manning
And Mitchell Alan Michael
Smith

Thank You
Jeff Migliozi
Michael Roche
Lori Spencer
Carolyn Assa
Jaimi Lard
Marilyn Rea Beyer
Noell Dorsey
Bill Appel
Carmen Harris
Rachel Wetschensky
Christina Alexandra Voros

Actors Shakespeare Project

Kori Feener

Keiran Watson-Bonnice

Seth Horowitz

Marina Bedny

Jan Seymour-Ford

Cara Pelletier

Pamela Ryan

Mara Bresnahan

Matt Langer

Ashley Bernard

Daniel Dintzner

Igor Kaminski

Helen Selsdon

Perry Garfinkel

Ryan Romeiser

Judith Vecchione

Lisa Palone

Braille Design

2me

The Metropolitan Museum
of Art

The Salvation Army

Nocturnem Draft Haus

Jeffrey L. Berman, M.D. -

Maine Eye Center

Margaret Hoffman -

Boothbay Railway Village

Great Skates, Bangor ME

Paddy Murphy's Irish Pub,

Bangor ME

The Penobscot Pour House,

Bangor ME

Bangor Housing Authority

Ed McCurdy MC/DJ, Bangor

ME

The Charles Hotel

The director would like to thank his mom, Norma Jean Darcy, for teaching him what it means to see.

MUSIC

“Up to Me”

Written and performed by Bob Dylan

Courtesy of Columbia Records

By arrangement with Sony Music Licensing

“Turpentine”

Written by Michael Fiore and Michael Hiller

Performed by Criminal Hygiene

Courtesy of New Professor Music

"You Wish You Were Red"

Written by Eva Susanne Renlund and James Lee Dose

Performed by Trailer Trash Tracys

Courtesy of Domino Recording and Publishing Company Ltd

"Graduation"

Written and performed by Stone Cold Fox

Courtesy of Stone Cold Fox Music

Home Movie Footage provided by Tiffany Smith

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

"Daria" / MTV Networks

"Follow Your Arrow" / Brandy Clark, Kacey Musgraves, Shane
McAnally

"Baby Got Back" / Sir Mix-A-Lot

"Rise Up With Fists!!" / Jenny Lewis

"Pump Up The Volume" / Martyn Young, Steven Young

"Torn" / Phil Thornalley, Scott Cutler

"At Last" / Harry Warren, Mack Gordon

"Hey Leonardo (She Likes Me For Me)" / Blessid Union of Souls

"Gold on the Ceiling" / Brian Burton, Dan Auerbach, Patrick Carney

"Thomas & Friends" / BBC / HIT Entertainment

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Project