

Music Box Films presents

EDIE

Dir. Simon Hunter



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LOGLINE

Believing that it's never too late, newly widowed Edie (Sheila Hancock) embarks on a trip to the Scottish Highlands to fulfill her dream of climbing the intimidating Mt. Suilven, striking up a friendship with a young climber along the way.

S Y N O P S I S

Following the death of her husband, Edie (Sheila Hancock) breaks free from years of his control and rebels against her daughter's wish for her to move into assisted living by embarking on an adventure she and her father had always longed for: a trip to the Scottish Highlands to climb the world famous Mt. Suilven. Along the way, she hires young camping shop owner Jonny (Kevin Guthrie) to be her guide. Despite the generational differences between them, Jonny encourages Edie to fulfill her dream.

INTERVIEW WITH SIMON HUNTER, DIRECTOR

Did Sheila Hancock actually climb the mountain?

At the very start of the writing process I knew we had to find an actress of enormous talent, but also someone who could actually climb the mountain that was at the center of our tale. Somehow the audience always knows when you are deceiving them. I've done countless visual effects in my career, but I wanted this movie to be 100% authentic. How would I get an 83 year-old actress up a mountain in Sutherland? I remember the day I mentioned Sheila Hancock to our casting director Jeremy Zimmerman and he replied "I've just seen her on stage in *Grey Gardens* and she was bouncing around like an eighteen-year-old." That's who we want for Edie. A couple of months later, Sheila was embarking on a 14 kilometer trek to the base of Suilven mountain followed by an extremely tough ascent on a very steep ridge. I remember going up with the first AD a few weeks before and he said "you'll never ever get an actress of 83 up here, never!" But Sheila was determined; I could see it in her eyes when I first met her. She was determined and I mean bloody determined.

How did Sheila train for the role?

The moment Sheila decided to climb the mountain she went straight into training. She went to the gym, she had special Nordic walking training. As soon as we could, we fitted her with the Hanwag mountain boots that her character was to wear in the movie. Every time I spoke to her she proclaimed, "I've been training!" I knew she would do it; she had made up her mind. It was an incredible thing to witness. I don't imagine there are many actresses of 83 anywhere in the world who have climbed all that way with us. On top of this, Sheila had many grueling scenes to shoot; at night in driving rain, sequences of rowing and cycling, as well as appearing in almost every single scene. That's shooting long days often over 14 hours every day, six days a week for five weeks straight...and a 14 kilometer hike followed by camping out in the wilds for two nights then climbing one of the steepest mountains in Scotland.

What was your first impression when you saw the mountain for real?

Well I had climbed the mountain when I was very small so I knew it pretty well. Actually the first thing I thought when I saw the mountain at the start of the shoot in April was, "holy shit it's covered in snow! Let's hope Sheila arrives in the dark." It's a stunning mountain. Magical and simple. The name means "The Pillar" when translated from the Norse language.

Did climbing for real help achieve the performance?

I am sure it did. How could it not? I think the final shots of Sheila in the film were helped tremendously by the climb, I think this was Sheila's lowest point of energy she was just out on her feet and that's exactly the feel I wanted for the final shots. I was keen to avoid a happy bouncy end, it was more a reflective, poignant moment, Edie has done what she came for and this is possibly the most special moment at the tail end of an unfulfilled life.

What was it like working with Sheila Hancock and Kevin Guthrie?

Hard work, but in a good way. They are so bright, smart and intuitive. It was great for the film; they were always in the story and they both had a very strong sense of narrative, which helped me so much. We spent one long Sunday talking through the parts just before we shot and I think that really cemented the characters, we came up with many inspired ideas that day. Kevin really is a fine actor, what I love about him is that he's playing this young man, Jonny, who is trying to make sense of the world and his place in it, but we glimpse the hidden little boy every now and then. Just little glimpses of what he must have been like as a seven-year-old and it makes his character so endearing. With Sheila as well, she can really keep you on your toes as she's written, directed and performed at the highest levels. I think that came through in her performance. She was incredibly disciplined and always brought something new to each scene, particularly in the visual sequences at the end. You can't just walk through the wilderness, what are you thinking? What has just happened? What memories does this invoke? Sheila was just fantastic with these scenes and added so much.

What were the challenges you faced while shooting in these difficult locations?

Many. Time is always a problem, but I think the sheer number of difficult locations was our biggest challenge. One minute we were lumping equipment to a remote disused cottage to film the cottage (Boothy) scene, the next we were out at sea with Sheila and Kevin filming them fish, and then of course we had to take an entire film crew and an 83-year-old actress up a mountain. We decided to take the climb in stages as in the film. We camped out on two separate nights. This was a huge logistical challenge with all our equipment. Zeiss lenses weigh a ton, and we had to carry everything. On top of that, we had to get the crew fed, and everyone sleeping happily under the stars. I remember being woken early one morning at camp site hearing Sheila proclaim "bloody hell it's freezing" and I just sank back into my sleeping bag thinking we should have got Sheila a Goose down bag, not a cheap synthetic one.

What sort of people might enjoy watching Edie?

I think the film actually appeals to many young people. There is something inspirational about the film, something about setting your mind to something and seeing it through. It's timeless. I wanted the film to be a mood piece as well as a narrative story. The final half hour is almost without dialogue, the visuals, the music and most importantly the performance keeps you riveted to the screen. But at its heart it's a very simple tale, it was always meant to be. I didn't want a very narrative story with lots of twists and turns, it's a gentle, simple but not simplistic tale that sets it out from the crowd. I think it will remind people about their parents and their hopes and dreams, ambitions achieved or not... Life doesn't always deliver what you hope for when you're young. In that sense it's a bittersweet tale but I believe a very accessible one.

— Simon Hunter

ABOUT SIMON HUNTER (DIRECTOR)

After graduating from film school, Simon went on to write and direct a handful of short films, one of which led British Screen to invest in his first feature length project, *Lighthouse*. With the additional help of Winchester Films, the \$2.5m film went on to win prizes at many acclaimed European film festivals. The *New York Post* called it “as suspenseful as anything in recent history”.

Simon joined with Infinity Producer Mark Stothert to direct his first commercial, a clever take on Sony Playstation’s *Double Life* for the Lothian Health Board. It has been recognized by Shots for its strong impact and he was selected for most promising newcomer.

Lighthouse caught the eye of Saatchi and Saatchi’s Bob Isherwood at their New Directors Showcase in Cannes, who says ‘Few films demonstrate so effectively how tension gets attention. The tension is dynamic’. Simon has gone on to direct commercials for British Heart Foundation, British Airways, Royal Sun Alliance, Postbank, the Raindance Film Festival and many more.

It was after a long three years working on the science fiction movie *The Mutant Chronicles*, produced by Edward R Pressman, that Simon began developing his passion project *Edie*. Simon splits his time between Berlin and London but often can be found in the mountains of Scotland.

ABOUT SHEILA HANCOCK (EDIE)

Sheila’s extensive career spans theatre, radio, television and film, and she is also now enjoying a career as a writer and features presenter. She has been honored with two Lifetime Achievement Awards: Women in Film and Television, and *The Lady Ratlings* as well as an OBE for services to drama in 1974, with a CBE following in 2011. As well as performing extensively for the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre, Sheila was the first woman Artistic Director of the RSC tour, and the first woman to direct in the Olivier Theatre, National Theatre. She was also associate Artistic Director of the Cambridge Theatre Company.

Sheila’s previous work in films ranges from *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, *Love and Death on Long Island* and *Yes, to Carry on Cleo* and *3 Men and a Little Lady*. Sheila was nominated for a BAFTA for her performances in *The Russian Bride*, and the BBC series *Bedtime*. She has just finished filming on the Sky comedy drama *The Dali and the Cooper* and other Television work includes *Before I Call You In*, a monologue for television written especially for her by Hugo Blick; *Delicious*, *Endeavour*, *New Tricks*, *Hustle*, *The Catherine Tate Show*, *Nellie and Melba*, *Moving On*, *Just Henry* and *After Thomas*, as well as presenting a number of documentary features.

Sheila’s work as an author includes *The Two of Us* (Author of the Year Award), its follow up *Just Me*; *Ramblings of an Actress*, and most recently, her debut novel *Miss Carter’s War*.

ABOUT KEVIN GUTHRIE (JONNY)

Kevin is a Scottish actor. His best-known roles are Ally in *Sunshine on Leith* (2013) and Ewan in Terence Davies’s 2015 film *Sunset Song*. He also performed the lead role in *Peter Pan* at King’s Theater, Glasgow, in 2011.

Kevin attended the PACE Youth Theatre in Paisley and appeared in small roles in television and film. He studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (then the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama). He left after receiving the title role in the National Theatre of Scotland’s production of *Peter Pan* in 2010, graduating later in 2011 with a BA in Acting.

Alongside theatre work, including a role in 2013's *Macbeth* starring James McAvoy at Trafalgar Studios, Kevin had a starring role in 2013's musical drama *Sunshine on Leith*. In 2015 he acted in Robert Carlyle's directorial debut *The Legend of Barney Thomson*.

In 2016, Kevin starred in Gillies MacKinnon's remake of the 1949 Ealing Studios classic *Whisky Galore!* In 2017, he appeared in Christopher Nolan's World War II epic *Dunkirk*.

FILMING LOCATIONS



Mt. Suilven



Glencanisp estate

Suilven (Scottish Gaelic: Sula Bheinn) is one of the most distinctive mountains in Scotland. Lying in a remote area in the west of Sutherland, it rises almost vertically from a wilderness landscape of moorland, bogs and lochans known as Inverpolly National Nature Reserve.

Suilven forms a steep-sided ridge some 2 km in length. The highest point, known as Caisteal Li-ath (the Grey Castle in Scottish Gaelic), lies at the northwest end of this ridge. There are two other summits: Meall Meadhonach (Middle Round Hill) at the central point of the ridge is 723 m high, whilst Meall Beag (Little Round Hill) lies at the southeastern end.

In 2005 Glencanisp estate, of which Suilven forms part, and the neighboring Drumrunie estate, were bought by the local community with the help of the John Muir Trust. The Assynt Foundation aims to create local employment and safeguard the natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of the community and future generations, and for the enjoyment of the wider public.



Lochinver, Scottish Highlands
Lochinver estuary



Culag Woods Lochinver

Lochinver (Loch an Inbhir in Gaelic) is a village on the coast in the Assynt district of Sutherland, Highland, Scotland. A few miles northeast is Loch Assynt which is the source of the River Inver which flows into Loch Inver at the village.

Sitting on a sheltered bay north of Ullapool in the wilds of the far north west, the town splits into three parts: the harbor, the village, and Baddidarrach, along the shore of Loch Inver.

*"I nod and nod to my shadow and thrust
A mountain down and down.
Between my feet a loch shines in the brown, Its silver paper crinkled and edged with rust. My lungs say No;*

But down and down this treadmill hill must go.

*Parishes dwindle. But my parish is
This stone, that tuft, this stone
And the cramped quarters of my flesh and bone.
I claw that tall horizon down to this; And suddenly My shadow jumps huge miles away from me.”*

— Climbing Suilven by Norman MacCaig

CREDITS

Sheila Hancock... Edie
Kevin Guthrie... Jonny
Amy Manson... Fiona
Paul Brannigan... McLaughlin
Wendy Morgan... Nancy

Director... Simon Hunter
Screenwriters... Elizabeth O'Halloran
Director of Photography... August Jakobsson
Editing... Olly Stothert
Music & Conductor... Debbie Wiseman
Producer... Mark Stothert
International Sales... Film Seekers
Released by Music Box Films



ABOUT MUSIC BOX FILMS

Music Box Films is a North American distributor of acclaimed international, independent, and documentary features. Recent releases include 2018's French Oscar submission for Best Foreign Language Film, Emmanuel Finkiel's *MEMOIR OF WAR*, Pernille Fischer Christensen's *BECOMING ASTRID*, Christian Petzold's *TRANSIT*, and Thomas Stuber's romantic drama *IN THE AISLES*. Upcoming releases include Claudio Giovanessi's *PIRANHAS*, Kirill Mikhanovsky's *GIVE ME LIBERTY*, Simon Hunter's *EDIE*, and François Ozon's *BY THE GRACE OF GOD*. Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates the Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premiere venue for independent and foreign films. For more information, please visit www.musicboxfilms.com.