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presenteert

# MARION BRIDGE

EEN FILM VAN WIEBKE VON CAROLSFELD



*Best Canadian First Feature Film* -Toronto International Film Festival 2002

Geselecteerd voor de VPRO TIGER AWARDS competitie



## MARION BRIDGE - een speelfilm van Wiebke von Carolsfeld

**MARION BRIDGE** is het speelfilmdebuut van Wiebke von Carolsfeld, bekroond met de *Best Canadian First Feature Film* tijdens het Toronto International Film Festival 2002. De film is gebaseerd op een toneelstuk van Daniel MacIvor, die ook tekende voor het speelfilmscenario.

In **MARION BRIDGE** keert Agnes (*Molly Parker*), een aantrekkelijke jonge vrouw met een getroebleerd verleden, terug naar haar geboortedorp Cape Breton, om met haar twee zussen te zorgen voor hun ernstig zieke moeder (*Marguerite McNeil*). Onmiddellijk bij aankomst al vangt een kat en muis spel aan tussen de door familiegeheimen uit elkaar gegroeide zussen. Meteen ook wordt duidelijk dat Agnes zich sterker en gelukkiger voordoet dan ze werkelijk is.

Met haar terugkomst wil Agnes eindelijk afrekenen met een aantal pijnlijke zaken uit het verleden. Maar in het huis vol familiegeheimen heeft haar extreme zelfdestructieve gedrag aanvankelijk net het tegenovergestelde effect. Achter Agnes' worstelingen met de drank gaan namelijk veel grotere kwellingen schuil. Net zoals er achter de bitsheid van haar zus Theresa (*Rebecca Jenkins*) een enorme verslagenheid schuil gaat om haar mislukte huwelijk. Zoals ook hun jongensachtige zus Louise (*Stacy Smith*) zich achter de TV verschuilt bij gebrek aan een echt leven.

Toch zet Agnes' pijnlijke speurtocht uiteindelijk een aantal gebeurtenissen in gang waardoor alle drie de zussen zichzelf en elkaar terugvinden.

Scherpe observatie en karakterisering, spitse humor en subtiele acteerprestaties brengen **MARION BRIDGE** naar een aangrijpende ontknopung.

*"I so much wanted it to be a girl.  
Because than we would be like a perfect family,  
with four perfect sisters. And we were going to name her Marion Bridge,  
after the song, you know..."*



**MARION BRIDGE** /90 min./35 mm/Engelstalig/Kleur/Canada 2002

<b>MARION BRIDGE - CREW</b>
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<b>Regie</b>	Wiebke von Carolsfeld
<b>Scenario</b>	Daniel McIvor ( <i>gebaseerd op zijn toneelstuk</i> )
<b>Producenten</b>	Julia Sereny Jennifer Kawaja Brent Barclay Bill Niven
<b>Camera</b>	Stefan Ivanov
<b>Montage</b>	Dean Soltys
<b>Filmmuziek</b>	Lesley Barber
<b>Art Direction</b>	Bill Fleming

<b>MARION BRIDGE - CAST</b>
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<b>Agnes</b>	Molly Parker ( <i>Max, Kissed</i> )
<b>Theresa</b>	Rebecca Jenkins ( <i>Bye Bye Blues, Black Harbour</i> )
<b>Louise</b>	Stacy Smith ( <i>New Waterford Girl</i> )
<b>moeder</b>	Marguerite McNeil
<b>Joanie</b>	Ellen Page
<b>Chrissy</b>	Hollis McLaren
<b>Dory</b>	Emmy Alcorn
<b>Ken</b>	Joseph Rutten

## Over regisseur **WIEBKE VON CAROLSFELD**

Wiebke von Carolsfeld (1964) werd geboren in Duitsland en verhuisde als jong volwassene naar Canada. Ze ging aan de slag als editor en werkte aan o.a. *The Five Senses* van Jeremy Podeswa. In 1998 en 2000 regisseerde ze twee korte speelfilms, waarvoor ze ook de scenario's schreef. Voor een van de rollen in *From Morning On I Waited Yesterday*, haar eerste korte film, vroeg ze actrice Molly Parker. Ook in *Marion Bridge*, von Carolsfelds eerste lange speelfilm, speelt Molly Parker een van de hoofdrollen.

Regie:

<b>2002</b>	'Marion Bridge'
<b>2000</b>	'Spiral Bound' (short)
<b>1998</b>	'From Morning On I waited Yesterday' (short)

Film editing:

<b>2001</b>	'Bay of Love and Sorrows' van Tim Southam
<b>2000</b>	'Eisenstein' van Renny Bartlett
<b>1998</b>	'The Five Senses' van Jeremy Podeswa
<b>1997</b>	'Permission' van Daniel MacIvor
<b>1997</b>	'Fresh from the Boat' from Peter Demas
<b>1995</b>	'Shoemaker' van Colleen Murphy



## Over actrice **MOLLY PARKER**

De in Vancouver geboren Molly Parker (1972) speelde na haar acteursopleiding in een groot aantal Canadese speelfilms. Haar doorbraak kwam met *Kissed* van Lynne Stopkewich. Daarna volgden films als *Waking the Dead* van Keith Gordon, *Ladies Room* van Gabriella Cristiani en *The Five Senses* van Jeremy Podeswa. Naast Ralph Fiennes speelde ze in 2000 in *Sunshine* van Isvan Szabos.

Momenteel leeft Molly Parker afwisselend in Los Angeles en Toronto.



2002	'Marion Bridge' van Wiebke von Carolsfeld 'Max' van Menno Meyjes 'Pure' van Gillies MacKinnon
2000	'Sunshine' van Isvan Szabos
1999	'Wonderland' van Michael Winterbottom 'The Intruder' van David Bailey 'The Five Senses' van Jeremy Podeswa 'Waking The Dead' van Keith Gordon 'Ladies Room' van Gabriella Cristiani 'Sweathearts Of The World' van Matt Bissonnette en Steven Clark
1998	'Under Heaven' van Meg Richman 'From Morning On I Waited Yesterday' van Wiebke von Carolsfeld
1996	'Kissed' van Lynne Stopkewich
1995	'Wings Of Courage' van Jean-Jaques Annaud 'Little Criminals' van Stephen Surjik 'Deceived By Trust: A Moment Of Truth Movie' van Chuck Bowman 'Last Of The Dogmen' van Tab Murphy
1992	'Anything For Love' van Michael Keusch

## **German-born director overcame the odds to make Marion Bridge**

- By Judy Gerstel / Toronto Star / September 15, 2002

Toronto film director Wiebke (pronounced Vibka) von Carolsfeld: "It's the most beautiful film on the planet. You have to believe that because you spend so much time and energy on it."

Experienced as a film editor - she edited Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses* - von Carolsfeld says: "Post-production is something I'm comfortable with. I sleep well. That's the good thing about working with experienced people. But if anything had gone wrong, there would have been panic." She adds, with not a little relish, "There was no room for error."

The 37-year-old director, who came to Canada from Germany at the age of 23 speaking little English but intending to be a book editor, clearly likes to be daunted. Also maybe taunted. A high school teacher in Cologne once told her she had "no capacity to learn a foreign language."

"Thankfully, he was proven wrong," she says with satisfaction. He wasn't the only one. Realizing she wasn't easily going to become a book editor in Canada, von Carolsfeld became interested in a friend's film editing project. "I watched my friend editing and wanted to become a film editor. I fell in love with the amazing ability to tell a story visually," she recalls. "Being German, the way I think is that to learn something, you have to go to school. So I applied to Ryerson (university in Toronto). And I was rejected on the basis of not having Grade 13 - strange because I have 18 years of schooling in Germany and a BA-comparable degree."

So on her own initiative, von Carolsfeld says, she called some editors - "and I got an editing job on *M. Butterfly* and for cable as well." Von Carolsfeld directed her first short, *From Morning On I Waited Yesterday*, which played at the 1998 Toronto festival. "I didn't want to just be a frustrated editor," she explains. "Once I was on the set of my first short, I realized that, wow, there's something about this that makes me feel very alive." What, exactly? "Trying to find the truth in every moment and not be distracted.... Shooting *Marion Bridge*, I realized that I loved being a director and being on set, interacting with creative people to tell stories that are close to my heart rather than only helping other people with their stories."

Von Carolsfeld found that editing was the perfect preparation for directing. "Editing is all about that - you shave away all the stuff that's unnecessary and scrutinize performances and images for what is alive and true." Still, despite her confidence, she admits to having been intimidated about directing a feature. "Where to start? The weather in Nova Scotia; the casting before we started; locations; am I going to be able to say the right things to the actors?"

Experienced and supportive producers, crew and cast - star Molly Parker had appeared in her short - helped enormously. "I could ask for advice. It was important for me to know I could get help with things I didn't know about."



Dennis Harvey - Reviewed at Toronto Film Festival, Sept. 6, 2002.

"Economical script by popular Canadian thesp Daniel McIvor (whose own directorial debut "Past Perfect" also preemed in Toronto), a sensitive directorial bow by editor Wiebke von Carolsfeld and solid performances lend conviction if not quite distinction to the drama *MARION BRIDGE*. Tale of three scrapping adult sisters reuniting over their mother's deathbed in a Nova Scotian small town has a truthful ring.

Ebbing health of hard-drinking/smoking mom Rose (Marguerite McNeil) brings prodigal daughter Agnes (Molly Parker) back home to pint-sized Sydney from Toronto, where she's earned her own share of hard knocks. Her good intentions are greeted with suspicion at first by sour, divorced elder sis Theresa (Rebecca Jenkins) and couch potato youngest (Stacy Smith), who've heard their like before. But Agnes does want to make things right, in part by facing some past scars -- notably the sexual abuse by a now-estranged dad, which resulted in a child she gave up to adoption. Thesps are fine, presentation thoughtful and confident."

## MARION BRIDGE - Notes about the production by the director and lead actresses

First time director Wiebke von Carolsfeld defines her fascination with Marion Bridge:

*"I fell in love with this story as soon as I read it. The characters have such a refreshing immediacy, are developed with honesty and clarity and their very human failures and desires give each one of them room to breathe and live. They are compassionate and conflicted, and loving yet deeply flawed. I like and relate to them all".*

It is the unique expression of truth and honesty in Daniel MacIvor's celebrated writing that makes Marion Bridge so compelling. Wiebke enthuses, *"It's because of Daniel's ability to pick up the nuances and the strange comedy of life that we see that these characters are like us. The humour comes out of the dynamics between the characters and is emphasized by the amazing performances by the actors."*

The casting of the three sisters was a crucial element in bringing this story to life. Molly Parker, who had acted in one of Wiebke's short films and admired Daniel's writing, was committed to starring as Agnes from day one. *"Molly is an amazingly intelligent and forceful actress, vigorously dedicated to finding the emotional truth in every moment, and she is a tireless collaborator"* Wiebke states.

Molly's on-screen charisma is complemented beautifully by that of Rebecca Jenkins, who plays her older sister Theresa. In fact, their chemistry was confirmed when they were mistaken for sisters while in Halifax for the production. Having just completed another MacIvor-penned film, *Past Perfect*, Rebecca knows his writing well. She marvels, *"Because the story is so real and it unfolds so naturally, we go from laughter to tears just as people do. Daniel's dialogue is effortless to remember because it's inherent"*.

The rest of the cast comes out of the rich talent pool that Nova Scotia has to offer. Rounding out the principal cast is Stacy Smith as the middle sister Louise. She was first brought to Wiebke's attention in the Sienna Films produced *New Waterford Girl*, in which Stacy gives an equally memorable performance.

The immensely gifted Ellen Page plays young Joanie. Wiebke first encountered her in a preliminary casting session last year and immediately knew that she had found her Joanie. *"Originally, I thought that this would be a particularly difficult part to cast, but Ellen is such a strong talent that all my worries were immediately put to rest."*

Marguerite McNeil, who plays the mother Rose, hails from Cape Breton. Like her character she is a very spirited person, attested to by the fact that she ran away to New York at 16 to join the theatre. Jackie Torrens plays Agnes' old friend Marlene and Ashley MacIsaac joined the cast to play Mickey the stoner boyfriend alongside fellow musician turned actor Heather Rankin, as his girlfriend Sue.

With such a high caliber of writing and acting talent involved, Wiebke took an elemental approach to directing. *"I tried to keep it real, organic and simple. A lot of energy was focused on illuminating emotions and on finding truth in the small moments."* She feels her background as an editor gave her "insight into the essentials needed to make a scene, transitions and ultimately when



to call 'cut'". Rebecca Jenkins agrees, "*Wiebke's experience in editing gives her a clear sense of how to tell story*".

Principal Photography commenced at the end of April 2002 in Halifax. Stefan Ivanov (*Bliss, Full Blast*) joined the crew from Montreal and shooting proceeded for five weeks in predictably unpredictable Nova Scotia weather. The last two weeks were shot in a Dartmouth studio where Bill Fleming (*Deeply, Margaret's Museum*) had build the beautiful set of the family home. After wrapping principal photography, a small second unit crew travelled to Cape Breton to shoot exterior shots of Sydney and its surroundings.

Marion Bridge was edited by Dean Soltys (*Trudeau*) and Lesley Barber (*You Can Count On Me, Mansfield Park*) came on to compose the hauntingly minimal score.

Marion Bridge is a story about our need to accept our past, rediscovering a sense of hope and finding a way to move on. The sense of hope in the film was of key appeal to both the director and actors. Wiebke von Carolsfeld explains, "*We all need to find ways to forgive ourselves and those around us, and only then can we live in peace. In Marion Bridge there is no easy "happily ever after". No one gets exactly what they wanted, or even what we want for them, but they get something that allows them to move forward, and that feels real.*"

For Molly Parker, the sense of hope in her character comes from Agnes' ability to forgive: "*Agnes comes to a place of acceptance and forgiveness of her family and of herself, and it's from there that she is able to move on*". As Rebecca Jenkins observes "*in the end the three sisters find something within themselves that they didn't know they had before*".