

LAIA COSTA

JOSH O'CONNOR

# Only You

BFI LONDON  
FILM FESTIVAL  
SUTHERLAND AWARD 2018  
NOMINEE

a film by HARRY WOOTLIFF

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# Only You

## SYNOPSIS

Elena (Laia Costa) en Jake (Josh O'Connor) ontmoeten elkaar toevallig tijdens Nieuwjaarsnacht wanneer ze bakkeleien over dezelfde taxi. Ze besluiten de taxi te delen en belanden bij Elena in bed. Dit is de start van een gepassioneerd liefdesavontuur. Ondanks het leeftijdsverschil wordt deze hartstochtelijke relatie alsmaar serieuzer en een baby is het enige wat nog lijkt te ontbreken. Zwanger raken gaat echter nog niet zo gemakkelijk en dit proces zorgt voor de nodige spanning. Is de liefde voor elkaar groot genoeg om de uitdaging aan te gaan?

Le soir du nouvel an, Elena (35 ans) et Jake (26 ans) se rencontrent de manière inopinée, en se disputant un taxi qu'ils finissent par partager. Débute entre eux une histoire passionnée. Rapidement, ils emménagent ensemble et la question de fonder une famille commence à poindre, les aléas de la vie aussi... Sauront-ils traverser certaines épreuves sans mettre en péril leurs sentiments ?

VK / RU - 2018 - duur / durée 119min



# Only You

## CAST

Laia Costa	Elena
Josh O'Connor	Jake
Lisa McGrillis	Carly
Bobby Rainsbury	Zoe
Stuart Martin	Shane
Peter Wight	Andrew
Kevin O'Loughlin	Mark
Gregor Firth	Connor
Natalie Arle-Toyne	Siobhan
Tam Dean Burn	Mike
Isabelle Barth	Rose



# Only You

## CREW

regie & scenario   realisation & scénario	Harry Wootliff
producenten   produit par	Tristan Goligher Matthieu de Braconier Rachel Dargavel Claire Mundell
co-producent   co-producteur	Sean Wheelan
uitvoerend producenten   producteurs exécutifs	Philip Knatchbull Cate Kane Louisa Dent Jennifer Armitage Vincent Gadelle Orion Lee
DOP	Shabier Kirchner
montage	Tim Fulford
production design	Andy Drummond
supervising sound editor	Joakim Sundström
music supervisor	Connie Farr
muziek   musique	Emilie Levienaise-Farrouch
casting	Kahleen Crawford Caroline Stewart
costumes	Odile Dicks-Mireaux
casting	Nina Gold



line producer  
first assistant director

Katy Engels  
Wendy Ashman

# Only You

## HARRY WOOTLIFF

Harry Wootliff was BAFTA-nominated for her debut short film, *Nits*, which was selected for Cannes Directors' Fortnight in 2005. Her second short, *Trip*, followed in 2009, and was selected for the Berlinale as well as more than 30 other festivals worldwide. With her debut feature film, *ONLY YOU*, Wootliff affirms this early promise and offers an original, moving and vibrant take on the modern love story, featuring stellar performances by two rising stars in current European film.



I didn't go to film school - I trained as an actress and before that as a dancer and I began to write. When I wrote and directed my short films, *Nits* and *Trip*, I found it was a sort of revelation to be directing and not acting. It was like everything that I liked about acting without the bits that I didn't - without having to expose myself in that way. I started developing another feature project with the BFI [British Film Institute], and then developing *ONLY YOU*. In the end I had to push for one, and I pushed for *ONLY YOU* - I suppose I just felt more compelled to tell that story at that time.

*Can you describe the story and what drew you to it?*

I really like relationship stories. I wanted to make a really intimate portrayal of a couple, so you felt like you were going home with them and seeing what happens behind closed doors. I also knew that there had to be something that threatened the relationship. I wanted it to be something very relevant to now - and involuntary childlessness tends to be thought of as a modern phenomenon, even though it's obviously occurred throughout human history.

But it was also something they would have to go through together. What's hard about being a couple going through something that affects you both is that you don't have the same feelings at the same time. And there might be those lovely moments when one of you is feeling strong and can support the other - but there are going to be other moments when you're feeling bad in different ways and you're not

connecting. It's going to be an individual journey and that's going to be hard. I also very much wanted it to be a relationship story, a love story, and not a medical story.

But I think the film is really relevant to people who have kids as well. You could trade the pressure of not having children for the pressure of *having* children. I really didn't want to alienate anyone. I didn't want it just to be a story about people not being able to have children.

*The characters feel extremely vivid and idiosyncratic...*

I really wanted to hold on to their individuality. It's easy for things to get ironed out in the development process – “*Are men like that? Is the age gap enough? Is it too much?*” – but they're very specific people, and I really wanted to hang on to the specifics of them. Josh and Laia just played that so well. They've got lots of different sides to them all the way through the film; they're both bad and they're both good. And the interesting thing about the age gap is that it's a red herring, both for the audience and for them – it just isn't relevant. If it was the other way round, after all, we'd think nothing of it. We see that in films all the time, and it's just a normal relationship!

*You avoid the stereotype whereby women hunger for parenthood more than men. Jake, though he's younger, is very clear about wanting a baby.*

I love it that she's not the one pushing. I didn't want to portray a man-eating woman desperate to conceive because time's running out for her. We read in the papers about women “leaving it too late” to have children, or putting it off because they'd rather freeze their eggs – but I don't buy it, personally.

I find it offensive. People don't wait because they're too busy or ambitious or selfish to have children. They wait because they want to make sure they're with the right person.

It's a feminist movie. She wants the baby, but that doesn't make her a clichéd desperate woman. Every woman, whether they have had children or can't have or wanted to or didn't want to, has gone on a journey with that.

*How did you select your leading actors?*

I'd seen Laia in VICTORIA and just thought she was amazing. She read the script and was interested, and then spoke. Josh came in and read in a normal casting situation. On a budget this size, you don't have the luxury of getting them together for a chemistry read and seeing what they're like onscreen – but you're putting them together in your head. They've got different ways of acting: Laia will go off the script, make things up, do different things – she likes to be very free, whereas Josh really uses the constraints of the text. He went to drama school; she didn't. Their different styles fed into the roles.

For the first two weeks we shot just with Laia and Josh, in story order. So they spent the first week falling in love and the second week arguing. So at first they were so playful together – and then in the second week they'd go off to their own corners; there was a different vibe from them. They weren't method, but they were really feeling it all the time; the atmosphere on set between them definitely changed as the relationship went down. And I almost forgot that there were scenes to shoot with more than two people !

I suppose it's chemistry really. I wanted the film to be sexy, I wanted the couple to be sexy - I didn't want it to feel sexless.

*Do you think having that background as an actor informs your directing?*

It's useful having done it, because you know how they feel - it's not an alien experience. It makes you less wary. But I'm not sure how much difference it makes. To me it's just tuning in to who they are and what they need from you... I loved watching them do the scenes. And they just delivered what was in my head, but more, really.

*The actors playing Jake and Elena's friends and family are really striking too. How did you approach those smaller parts?*

It was really important to me that they were brilliant! Even with the tiny roles, I didn't want one line that jarred, or that didn't sound as organic and natural as the way Josh and Laia were delivering things. I saw *lots* of people - I found the parts very difficult to cast actually. You're creating their world. What I learned was that you build it through each little decision. When the characters only have a moment, they've got to be very vibrant... like Tam [Dean Burn] just has such

special warmth about him. And Peter [Wight] is brilliant. Maybe it's that they're very specific straight away - they're not everyman.

*Why did you shoot in Glasgow and what did that bring?*

I didn't want to set it in London. I was going to set it in Leeds, because that's where I'm from... And then we ended up being partly funded by Creative Scotland... and setting it in Glasgow was sort of a dream to me. That was just perfect. I really felt at home there; and I loved that it's not English. It gave me a real freedom. I wanted the film to feel classless, and being in Scotland - I suppose it's a bit like being abroad; I don't totally know where I am with it. I can't sum people up the way I can in England. And I like it that she's Spanish and he's English and they're in Scotland - I like the whole mix of it.

*The soundtrack is very striking - how involved were you in fashioning it?*

I knew I wanted it to be really eclectic, and to have a kind of rawness to the tracks - not a polished feel. I wanted the music to be really bold and memorable, but not manipulative... and not there to be music laid all the way over everything; to leave space in the film.



# Only You

## LAIA COSTA

Laia will be next seen in the feature debut of writer-director Harry Wootliff's *ONLY YOU* opposite Josh O'Connor; Dan Fogelman's *LIFE ITSELF* opposite Oscar Isaac and Olivia Wilde; in Nicolas Pesce's *PIERCING* opposite Christopher Abbott and Mia Wasikowska; and as the co-lead in Miguel Arteta's improvised film, *DUCK BUTTER*, with Alia Shawkat and produced by The Duplass Brothers (This role was conceived for a guy, but Miguel decided to go with a woman in order to cast Laia). Before that, she played the female lead of Drake Doremus' *THE NEWNESS* opposite Nicholas Hoult, *NIEVE NEGRA* opposite Ricardo Darin in Buenos Aires, as well as the lead of the independent film *MAINE* with Thomas Mann.

Laia starred in the critically-acclaimed film *VICTORIA*, which was almost entirely improvised by the actors. The 134 minute film was amazingly shot in one single take and was only their 3rd attempt at doing so. Laia's lead performance is natural, innocent, poignant, charming and utterly heartbreaking. She won the LOLA (Germany's equivalent of our Oscar) for "Best Actress" and was nominated for a European Film Award for "Best European Actress." The film was also nominated for Best European Film. Laia was also just nominated for the BAFTA EE Rising Star Award, which shines the spotlight on young talent

that has "captured the attention of both the public and the film industry."



*How do you select a project, and what appealed to you about ONLY YOU?*

It's quite an instinctive decision, a mix of a lot of stuff: you read the script, and you look up the director and the other stuff he or she has done, and then you also look at the role... I think when I talk to the director for the first time, that's when I can feel if there's something there that's telling me, "I really want to follow the rabbit and see where he is leading me!"

The first time I read the script, I wasn't sure I was getting what it was getting at, I was quite remote from the issues it broaches, but my agent told me that I couldn't pass on this part – and my agent is very smart! Then I got to talk to Harry, a LOT, and that's when I knew for a fact that I had to do this. I also saw her short films and I thought they were amazing; I could see that we were on the same page.

So that's what was so interesting for me about this project: it got me to understand people I didn't get at first, to connect me to issues I didn't fully grasp. If I feel that a project is going to give me something like that I usually go for it.

*Was there anything about Elena that was more familiar, or that reminded you of yourself?*

No! Nothing at all! I was wondering all the time: why is she saying this? Why is she behaving like that? *Why isn't she doing this other thing I would have been doing?!* I learned so much, about human behaviour and emotion. Harry was very

patient and very smart, taking the time to answer all my questions about the character, and bringing Elena to life was a genuine teamwork.

It's also one of the reasons why I accepted the part. I tried to find other movies that talked about the psychological process of a couple dealing with these issues... and I couldn't find even one. Not a single one.

So even if I had no idea why Elena reacts like that in a given scene, I needed to get there, because this story needed to be told.

*How did you find working with Josh O'Connor?*

There was instant chemistry with Josh. We both knew what Harry wanted, then we had fun with it – as much fun as possible. It was amazing to work with him. We were supposed to rehearse for a week before shooting, but I was in Florida when a hurricane hit, so I couldn't get my plane, and we missed the whole week of rehearsals. We only met one day before shooting! But it only took me five minutes to know that we were going to be a good team.

I didn't worry a lot about Josh's part, about his character's perception of the relationship – that wouldn't have been helpful for me. The couples are always disconnected; they don't know what's going on with the other one, and they don't know how to deal with the other one, and they don't know how to deal with themselves. So, when I had doubts, I shared them with Harry, not Josh, because I didn't think he needed that. And I didn't feel like I needed to know how he was feeling if my character didn't know it.

There was a week when we were shooting the good, happy times, and everyone was laughing and making jokes and hugging, and the mood was so sweet and so nice and so flirty...

I remember the assistant director was a little bit worried that we all had too much fun. And I remember Harry saying, "Don't worry – just wait and see next week!" And the next week we shot all the bad times the couple had to go through. No jokes! No hee hee, ha ha! Everyone was just silent and concentrating...

*After such an intense shoot, was seeing the finished film surprising to you?*

When I was reading it, I was like – this is a very intense two or three years, and a lot of stuff happens – how is it going to be clear? But then when I saw the movie, I thought: that was so smart. The way time passes and you just know it because they are in summer clothes or winter clothes – it's perfect.

*You work a lot outside your first language – does that affect your characters and performances?*

Nearly everything I've done is in English! So sometimes I'm wondering: what if I don't know how to act in Spanish anymore? You know that feeling when you speak a different language and you feel like you change a little bit...? If I speak French I can feel how some parts of my personality are more present. If I speak Catalan – because my first language is Catalan – that's the Laia I know, because I grew up with her... But it's so interesting because I started writing and I'm writing the script in English and I was like, "why am I writing in

English??" Because I'm used to reading English scripts. That's why – my brain related to it in English. So weird.

*What did you make of Glasgow, where ONLY YOU was shot?*

I was totally in love with the Scots and with Glasgow! I loved Glasgow. And when we had days off, I went to Edinburgh; I went to Inverness, to the Loch Ness; I went to the coast, to Troon. I was keeping a diary as if Elena was writing it, and I had these moments of isolation because I was travelling alone; and it was so good to connect with her when she feels alone... it was perfect. Everything matched: the movie, the people, the place, the mood.

At the beginning I had some trouble understanding the team; the accent was a little bit hard for me. But after a bit of practice, I got them perfectly, and they were so nice. And people try to help you so much all the time – when I was lost, there were ten different people trying to make sure I wasn't lost anymore... And I love the food! I think it's because I live in the States... in Scotland, a tomato tastes like an actual tomato. I can't wait to go back – any excuse. I had so much fun, and it's so beautiful.

*Do you miss your characters once filming ends?*

I'm always sad for a while. I destroyed the diary – everything that was Elena's stuff, I had to put it away, to go back to myself. It's always sad, because for me the best part of doing a movie is *doing* the movie. When the movie is premiering,



for me it's like the funeral, because it means it's not mine anymore - it's yours! I'm so proud of it, but at the same time I'm so sad, because it's done. No more phone calls with Harry about this scene or that scene...!

*What about the scriptwriting that you mentioned?*

I have a lot of ideas. I'm not worrying about them, because I'm working so much and learning so much - but there is some stuff that I think no-one has ever talked about it and someone

should do it. I'm just putting some thoughts on paper. I wouldn't want to say more than this for now!

*A final word on the film?*

I really love this movie and I'm so excited and so proud of it. I hope everyone is going to want to watch it. If you want to have kids, if you don't want to have kids - everyone has a family or wants to make a new family. Just because of that, everyone should see the movie.



# Only You

JOSH O'CONNOR

British actor, Josh O'Connor, trained with the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and has garnered praise and recognition inside and outside the industry for his roles across film, television and theatre, including being named a Screen International Star of Tomorrow in 2016 and a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit in 2018. Josh made his feature film debut in Lone Scherfig's "The Riot Club", opposite Sam Claflin and Douglas Booth, before working with Stephen Frears in his two recent films, "The Program", and "Florence Foster Jenkins", alongside Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant. After starring in "Peaky Blinders" and "Ripper Street" in 2014, he undertook the role of Lawrence "Larry" Durrell in ITV's hugely successful "The Durrells", whose final season is set to broadcast in 2019. Josh took the lead in the critically acclaimed "God's Own Country", a bold love story, which earned him a nomination for EE BAFTA Rising Star, and an award for Best Actor at the British Independent Film Awards, both in 2018.

Josh is currently starring as Marius in the BBC One adaptation of "Les Misérables", and can next be seen in the feature film "Only You", alongside Laia Costa. Currently, Josh is filming "The Crown" for Netflix and Left Bank Pictures, in which he plays Prince Charles opposite Olivia Colman's Queen. Next he will start as Mr Elton opposite





*What appealed to you about ONLY YOU?*

I was always going to be interested in doing something like this. The concept of having a relationship is so thrilling, so exciting and so fresh. From the off, it's obvious that they're totally in love. And then to have thrown on top of that, very early on, this huge life decision – I was fascinated by that. I didn't know where it was going to go, but I was excited to play with it. That was the main attraction.

*It feels a little unusual that of the two of them, Jake is the more obviously keen to commit and settle down.*

Totally, yeah. Jake's got his faults. There are times when I watch it and I want to shake him – he deals with stuff totally wrong, partly because he's immature. But I agree: we don't often see the male role as being one that wants it to work, wants them to be a family and be together and have a strong family – we don't see that on screen very often. There are some really beautiful scenes in this film that Harry gets so right, of Jake constantly trying to be strong for Elena, until that point where it pops and he's like, "This is me too. We're both going through this."

*How was it depicting such an intimate relationship with someone you'd just met?*

I have to bow down to Laia in this. She has this incredible ability to break down any kind of barriers. She's a really hard-working actress; she just came in and was no nonsense, and I

loved it. We both take our job really seriously and want to create something truthful and authentic and to do that – the best thing is to go, "forget everything else, let's just do it." The atmosphere created on set just felt very natural – the whole process. It never felt uncomfortable or uneasy.

*Did it help that you were able to shoot the relationship trajectory broadly in sequence?*

Definitely. Again, I'm so lucky that we were able to do that – it's really rare to get to shoot in sequence. One of the first things we shot was the taxi scene. And we were discussing it: "would I let her into my taxi? We just met; I'm sober, she's not..." What's great about Harry is that she would say: "Well, would you? Answer the question yourself." And we'd only ever do stuff that we all absolutely bought. More often than not, Harry was right, because she is this incredible genius... but the sequence thing helps, in that we know where we're at any one time, and we can work from there.

*Do you like to have a say in what your characters do?*

Sometimes. It depends on whether the creative team are up for doing that. What was great about this process was that Harry had this script that I loved, and then we'd do the scene and it might be a bit different – stuff would change, and that might happen from my performance, from Laia's performance, from Harry just noticing something, from the environment we were in... it was really nice. Equally though, you get the kind of director who's like, "this is the script and this is how it's going to be," and that can be really helpful and freeing for an actor as well. But certainly this process felt very relaxed and creative.



*Jake's relationships with characters other than Elena, such as his father, are also interesting.*

The father one's really interesting for me; and Peter Wight was incredible. I don't want to compare things too much to GOD'S OWN COUNTRY, because they're totally different projects - but the relationship with the father in GOD'S OWN COUNTRY, is more of a traditional relationship, right? It's two men who can't talk. But my relationship with my real dad is that I can talk to him about anything. So I think this is more of a modern story, one that doesn't allow for the norms that we're used to, like men not being able to chat. Harry's really clever with that, really good at making us go: it doesn't have to be one way. There are plenty of ways!

*How was shooting in Glasgow?*

Great! We were in Finnieston, which is very trendy, and I loved it. The people were hardworking, the crews are the best - it was really, really joyous.

*You've spoken in the past about wanting to direct; is that still on the agenda?*

Yeah! For sure.

To be honest, the acting schedule at the moment is taking over everything, but I've put aside some time next year to do a short. It's definitely always been an ambition of mine.

*So when you work with an inspiring director, you're taking notes...?*

Just nicking. Shamelessly nicking ideas! My short film will just be scenes from all the films I've acted in!! No, but I *love* meeting directors that are as good as Harry. She's so good; she'll go on and do incredible things.

*Do you prioritise jobs where you get that personal connection, over bigger projects that might be blockbusters?*

It's a question I'm still asking myself every time. I'm taking it step by step at the moment... But the size of the project doesn't necessarily mean it's creatively on point. You just don't know. But in the future, as a filmmaker and as an actor, it's just about creating an atmosphere that is creative, where everyone feels like they have a significant other.

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# CONTACT

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