

Getting There



a short film by BRENDAN PROST

Dates of Production: October 2013 – April 2014
16 minutes // Colour // Drama // Musical // Short Narrative
SCREENING FORMATS: Blu-Ray, DVD, ProRes 422, H.264

OFFICIAL SELECTION: Calgary International Film Festival (2014)
OFFICIAL SELECTION: San Jose International Short Film Festival (2014)
OFFICIAL SELECTION: New York Unscripted Film & Theatre Festival (2014)
OFFICIAL SELECTION: Downtown Tyler Film Festival (2014)
OFFICIAL SELECTION: Indie Fest USA (2014)
OFFICIAL SELECTION: Hamilton Film Festival (2014)

CONTACT: Brendan Prost (brendan.prost@hotmail.com)

WEBSITE: <http://brendanprost.com>

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Logline

Getting There is a vibrant, musical consideration of a young artist's struggle to collaborate and keep things in perspective.

Short Synopsis

Tanner, a passionate and single-minded mandolin player in a multi-instrumental folk band, struggles to drag his bandmates towards productivity and relevance at the risk of his own personal estrangement. But, after a disconcerting conversation with a famed singer-songwriter, Tanner takes a moment to pause and appreciate what he has already. *Getting There* is a vibrant, musical consideration of a young artist's struggle to collaborate and keep things in perspective.

Long Synopsis

The multi-instrumental folk collective Panhandlers Anonymous and its seven members are preparing for an upcoming performance, and mandolin player Tanner Holthe is dedicated to making sure that it goes well. In the days leading up to the show, he directs the band's rehearsal, gathers the necessary equipment, creates promotional material, and practices diligently on his own, all the while maintaining a part-time job at a local arts magazine. It is through this job that Tanner gets the opportunity to interview a personal idol, a successful folk singer-songwriter named Mark Talon. When Tanner takes a moment from his rigorous preparation for the Panhandlers performance to speak with Mark at a hotel bar, he is taken aback by their conversation. During the interview an intoxicated Mark reveals himself to be a sad, broken man who claims to reap no reward from the lifestyle that Tanner aspires to. Disillusioned by the experience, and fearful of the personal implications for his own future, Tanner returns home to try and write a puff piece for the magazine, and immediately afterwards has to rush out to perform with Panhandlers Anonymous. It is at the show, while Tanner's mind is reeling with a new found doubt about his future, that a brief encounter with a young fan offers Tanner a glimpse of the emotional reward that seems to have alluded Mark.



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Production Notes

Although Brendan Prost's graduate film project from Simon Fraser University is about an artist struggling to collaborate and keep things in perspective, the process of making *Getting There* was a deliberate and ultimately hugely successful effort to overcome those things.

The commitment to collaboration and building lasting interpersonal creative connections came early, with the decision to have actors learn instruments and play all the music that would be in the film. Brendan enlisted the help of musical supervisor and composer Nicole Gilley, a student in the music program at SFU, to not only write original music to be performed on camera, but also to help teach the actors how to look and sound like trained musicians. While the actors went through a musical boot camp with Nicole, they also worked through situational improvisation scenes—both individually and as a group—on a weekly basis with Brendan's direction. Through the improv exercises and extensive dialogue about the script, the actors would then build back story and create unique relationships between all the members of the band.

In response to the intense production of his feature film *Spaces and Reservations* in August of 2012, Brendan aimed to create a fun and positive environment when it came time to shoot *Getting There* in October of 2013. After assembling a crew of eager young SFU film students, and deciding to act as his own cinematographer and producer, Brendan embarked on a personal mission to be a more inspiring leader and to create a low-stress, yet energetic shooting environment.

Getting There is ultimately a project that is in spirit as much about the unseen process of collaborating and filmmaking as it is about the onscreen result. It's a film about a character remembering the importance of focusing on the here and now, and on the process, and on the people you collaborate with, but it's also about a group of actors and filmmakers experiencing re-engaging with those concepts through the production as well.



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Filmmaker Statement

My mom recently mentioned to me that she wished I'd never got involved in the whole movie business. To her, the palpable and seemingly perpetual unhappiness of her son could best be ascribed to a dogged and myopic pursuit of a successful filmmaking practise. Although at the time I dismissed the notion quickly, now that I have completed my undergraduate degree and screened my third feature film across Canada, and I remain mostly the same unhappy person that I was four years ago, I have been reevaluating the validity of her thesis a great deal.

I've been thinking that I do a lot of living for the future because I'm largely unsatisfied by the present. I work hard, but I don't enjoy my hard work. I'm someone who invests everything that they have in the future and the potential of what is still to come. I'm a person who does most of their living in anticipation of another day. This idea is increasingly terrifying to me.

In reaction to that growing fear, *Getting There* is a film about interrogating one of the fundamental assumptions I've made in deciding to live my life the way I have, and of my various conceptions of happiness, success, and satisfaction. Basically I'm concerned that I've invested so much in something under the unproven assumption that my efforts at self-expression will one day make me happy. What if they don't? What if I get there one day and still feel as lonely as I do now? What will have been the point of all this struggle, stress, and anxiety if the desired ends ultimately turn out to mean nothing to me? What will I have left in my life if filmmaking reveals itself to be without reward? Should I continue to invest my life in this pursuit without knowing that it will one day pay off?

This emotional experience of having the seed of doubt planted in the most concrete of all my conceptions about life is what I'm interested in expressing with this movie. The main character in *Getting There*, Tanner, is forced to confront a different potential vision for his future than what he always imagined it to be. During an interview with someone he idolizes—a potential future self—he looks up expecting to see a man enlivened by the love he receives from an adoring audience, but instead sees a sad and cynical man with seemingly nothing to live for. For this idol, Mark Talon, success has meant nothing. He reaps no emotional reward for years of hard work touring, recording, and putting himself out there. Mark, having achieved what Tanner hopes to achieve, has found it empty.

The implications of this revelation for Tanner are probably obvious. How does he continue forward with this newfound doubt? Does he continue at all? And not only does he have to reevaluate the way forward, he has to reconsider the way he lives now. In his pursuit of “getting there” he's pushed so many other things aside. The warmth of an intimate relationship and the joys of collaborating with friends to create music have been lost on Tanner in his tenacious pursuit of success. Are these things that need to be reclaimed?

I share with Tanner this humbling life moment of doubt and re-evaluation. For both of us, no longer is the way forward clear, and no longer are our priorities so obvious. *Getting There* is a movie about having the carpet pulled out from underneath you, just when you had convinced yourself that it was firmly affixed to the floor. It's about reminding yourself that the things you believe to be important, the things you believe matter in life, really are just that—beliefs. You may think you've discovered the way forward, but you never really know for sure.

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Technical Specifications

Running Time: 16 minutes

Shooting Format: RED RAW 5K // Colour

Sound: Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround or Dolby Digital Stereo

Presentation Formats:

- ProRes 422 (1080p – Stereo or 5.1 Surround)
- H.264 (1080p – Stereo or 5.1 Surround)
- Blu-Ray (1080p – Stereo or 5.1 Surround)
- DVD (720p – Stereo)
- DCP (2K – 5.1 Surround)

Contact

Brendan Prost

<http://brendanprost.com>

brendan.prost@hotmail.com

3285 E16th Avenue

Vancouver BC V5M2M8

778-686-5186

Connect

Website: <http://brendanprost.com/gettingthere.html>

Online Screener: <https://vimeo.com/100316137> (password: cottonhawk)

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/bprost>

Blog: <http://bprost.tumblr.com>

Stills: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/q3vdvkapzp30ffv/AADqUGDjcbgwkNFo_NdhnDM2a?dl=0

Poster Artwork: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/gri9m66vtu35nwo/web%20poster.jpg?dl=0>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/104825997>

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3711770>



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CAST/CREW BIOS

Brendan Prost (Writer, Editor, Cinematographer, Producer, Director)

Brendan Prost is a 25-year-old DIY filmmaker and a recent graduate of Simon Fraser University. He is best known as the ambitious and unabashedly personal young auteur behind three feature films, *Choch* (“one of the intriguing and involving low-budget indies to cross my desk in 2011” – The Independent Critic), *Generation Why* (Rising Star Award Winner at the Canada International Film Festival - 2010), and *Spaces and Reservations*, which screened across Canada in the spring of 2014.

Brendan’s directing credits also include a diverse set of short films on a variety of formats, including most recently an improvised act of self-interrogation entitled *Best Friends For Life* (Official Selection - Montreal World Film Festival). Currently, as well as distributing *Spaces and Reservations* and submitting his SFU grad film *Getting There* to film festivals, Brendan is in development on a new feature film project.

Originally a child actor from Calgary, Brendan relocated to Vancouver four years ago to pursue his education at SFU. There, he has continued to pursue his interest in performance-intensive, personal narrative filmmaking while completing his BFA and collaborating with his peers in a myriad of ways. Brendan’s films are characterized by their evocative, earnest spirit and particular emphasis on character.

Dayleigh Nelson (Actor - Tanner)

Dayleigh Nelson is a Canadian born actor currently based out of Vancouver. After spending a year performing on stage and doing shorts in Europe, Dayleigh returned to Canada in late 2012 and began producing weekly sketch comedy pieces that would spotlight his passion for dialects and impressions in a collective of writers and performers known as Motion Radio.

While still creating his own work, Dayleigh continued with a bevy of credits, and repeated collaborations with talented young indie filmmakers. His true passion lies in embodying and embracing character above all else, something he has been fortunate to explore through the grounded storied works of Brendan Prost. Dayleigh first teamed with Brendan in 2012 for the feature *Spaces and Reservations*, and then again in 2013 for *Best Friends For Life*, before taking on the lead role in *Getting There* his most rewarding and challenging of the three.

Aaron Turner (Actor - Mark Talon)

Aaron is a Canadian actor, writer, videographer, surfer, and waster. With an extensive background in theatre, Aaron’s notable previous role include Henry V in *Henry V*, John Proctor in *The Crucible*, and Johnny Canuck in *Johnny Canuck and the Last Burlesque*. Prior to his leading role in *Getting There*, Aaron and Brendan have previously collaborated on *Spaces and Reservations* (2014) and *Jerk* (Official Selection – Montreal World Film Festival 2012).

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Nicole Gilley (Composer, Music Supervisor, Actor)

Working towards a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music, Nicole has become steadily more interested and involved in composition for film since the beginning of her degree. With a background in songwriting and contemporary acoustic and electroacoustic composition, she strives to create complementary scores with her varied musical influences. Nicole has drawn inspiration from electroacoustic soundscapes and nature sounds to alternative folk music to create her scores, which she enjoys performing and recording both on-camera and off. She is based in Vancouver, Canada.

Sean Marshall Jr (Actor - Rob)

Sean Marshall Jr. is a creator and performer of film, dance and theatre from Vancouver, BC. As a member of two overlapping interdisciplinary performance collectives (O, o, o, o. and A Wake of Vultures), Sean is interested in developing new forms for old tricks, new frames for old forms, and generally concocting weird stuff in the studio.

Currently, Sean is gearing up for O, o, o, o.'s upcoming partnership with Radix Theatre for their show TBD - a three-week long show that tracks audience members via GPS. O, o, o, o. is also currently in the development stage with local filmmaker Sepehr Samimi on a series of genre-saturated shorts. As a freelance artist, Sean is looking forward to shooting part two of Zugzwang Films' *Crusade* trilogy (part one of which just premiered to a sold-out Fox Cabaret), and another collaboration with Brendan Prost in the near future.

Carolyn Yonge (Actor - Clea)

Raised in the Rocky Mountains with her triplet brother and sister, Carolyn discovered her love for story telling at a young age.

In her teen years, Carolyn worked with many community theatre groups performing various plays for communities in the Bow Valley. During this time Carolyn had the privilege of work-shopping the highly collaborative original musical, *History Skip*, featuring the songs of Hawksley Workman.

After taking a film studies course in high school, Carolyn became particularly interested in film acting, and in 2009 moved to Vancouver to pursue her education at the William Davis Center for Actors.

Currently Carolyn is heavily involved in the Vancouver improv scene, training often at the Vancouver Theatre Sports League, as well as continuing to shoot independent and student film projects when the opportunity arises.

Daniel Doheny (Actor)

Born and raised in Vancouver, Daniel has primarily gotten his start working in theatre around the City. A graduate of the Studio 58 acting program, where he received The Earl Klein Memorial Scholarship, Daniel has been working at Bard on the Beach the past two summers, most recently as Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Ferdinand in *The Tempest*. Daniel is also an active member of

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the sketch comedy group Humantown, who most recently won The Stanfield's Exposed competition for The Comedy Network.

Alea Rae Clark (Actor)

Alea Rae Clark is a songwriter, singer and multi-instrumentalist from Port Moody, Canada. She is most well known as the front-woman and namesake of the band Alea Rae; the New Westminster-based indie-folk trio is inspired by chamber pop, experimental and ambient music. Her role in *Getting There* marks her acting debut as the violinist in the fictional chamber folk band, Panhandlers Anonymous.

Connor Beardmore (Actor - Brent)

Connor Beardmore is a 17 year old actor who is currently attending high school in Coquitlam. Connor has always been interested in acting but only took his first acting class in 2008, immediately obtaining an agent. His acting career took off from there. He has been nominated for 3 Young Actor Artist Awards and in 2013 won for Best Performance in a short Film for *When I Grow Up I Want to Be a Dinosaur*. In 2009 Connor appeared in his first TV show, *Supernatural*. This was followed by an appearance in *Mr Young* in 2011 and his first co- star role for *Fringe* in 2012. He has since then guest starred on *Some Assembly Required* in 2013 and *The Killing* in 2014. Throughout this time, he has also appeared in numerous commercials, videos and short and independent films, including *Getting There*, *Insecurbia* and *The Golden Key*. He has always been a hard working actor who loves what he does and does what he loves.

Donald Sales (Actor - Clinton)

Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Donald Sales found himself in Vancouver in 2004 as a new member of Ballet British Columbia where he would dance for the next 8 years to follow. Art in every aspect has always been a part of Sales' life, beginning in middle school where singing in the school choir and at church began his desire for performance. In high school where his time was spent predominantly on the football field, Sales always made time for the stage, which led him to being intercepted by an invite to a ballet class.

Donald has created many ballets throughout his career in Vancouver for the likes of Ballet British Columbia, Cadence Ballet, Arts Umbrella and currently his own company Project 20. Project 20's grand opening will take place in 2014 as part of the Chutzpah Festival with a work entitled 'gR33N'.

Musically, Donald has created records such as Kardinal Offishal and Akon's 'Dangerous', Frankie J's 'Crush', Planet VI 'F*ck You', TVXQ's 'Humanoids' and more. He's continually producing records for artist worldwide.

Currently, Donald is pursuing his acting career and studying with Nadine Wright of ACT2.

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CREDITS

Cast

DAYLEIGH NELSON	Tanner (mandolin)
AARON TURNER	Mark Talon
SEAN MARSHALL JR.	Rob (guitar)
CAROLYN YONGE	Clea (glockenspiel)
NICOLE GILLEY	Nicole (bass guitar)
DANIEL DOHENY	Daniel (percussion)
ALEA RAE CLARK	Alea (violin)
CONNOR BEARDMORE	Brett
DONALD SALES	Clinton

Crew

BRENDAN PROST	Writer, Editor, Cinematographer, Producer, Director
NICOLE GILLEY	Music Supervisor, Composer
BRENDAN NAGEL	Assistant Director
BRANDON BOOTH	Camera Assistant
LUCAS ROSS	Music Recording Engineer
LAUREL K BROWN	Gaffer
JOEL SALAYSAY	Gaffer
JESSICA JOHNSON	Location Sound Mixer
CARMEN PERRY	Make-Up and Hair Design
SACHA HUSBAND	Key Grip
GLORIA MERCER	Grip/Sound Swing
RYAN CLOUGH-CARROLL	Grip/Sound Swing
JADE BAXTER	Grip
MAX GROSS	Grip
JENNA TAYLOR	Grip
KELLEN JACKSON	Grip
DAVID GREEN	Post-Production Sound and Music Mixer

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Statement of Improvisation

Making improvisation a part of your filmmaking process is really just about respecting actors enough to give them the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way. Too often in narrative filmmaking I see the creative work that actors do getting trivialized, or worse, I see actors getting placed in a position where they're unable to be successful.

Seeing real human beings onscreen who live and breathe beyond the boundaries of the onscreen narrative is what gives great films their emotional resonance. Everyone's got a different way of building those performances and fleshing out those characters in collaboration with their actors, and for me it always depends on the type of film I'm making, what the production will be like, and who the actors are. But one thing that never changes is the degree to which I expect actors to be involved and engaged... which is a lot. To me, including improvisation in your creative process is just a manifestation of that expected level of engagement.

With *Getting There*, I asked actors to learn instruments that they would then perform live on camera in loosely scripted musical scenes. During the pre-production, while they were learning their instruments and the original score music they'd need to perform, we also worked on situational improv scenes—in groups and individually—to build back story and create unique relationships between all the members of the band. I would then write and plan the film in response to our exercises. On set, a couple of scenes we shot simply with an outline of the intended action, and other scenes (like the one in the bar) were more scripted but featured a lot of deviation and syntactical changes on the day. Ultimately though, because the actors had become so familiar with their characters through the prep period, whatever text we had on set wasn't really a reference for us. The performances were being shaped by the original contributions of the actors in the moment and my spontaneous direction, both of which had been cultivated and made possible through the preproduction performance work.

If you're really soliciting the contributions of your actors and engaging them with the project in a substantial way, then you're going to have success creating performances. That may include improvisation of some kind, or it may not. The important thing is to systematically prioritize the work of the actors so that you can eventually see those real, living and breathing human beings onscreen, and your film can have the emotional life that it should. If I'm proud of one thing about *Getting There* it's that it does have an emotional centre. It has a big heart, and I owe that all to the actors.

Written for the New York Unscripted Film & Theatre Festival 2014
Brendan Prost